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THE BREAD OF DECEIT.

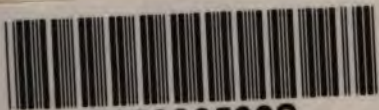


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THE BREAD OF DECEIT.

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THE

Bread of Deceit.

"BREAD OF DECEIT IS SWEET TO A MAN; BUT
AFTERWARDS HIS MOUTH SHALL BE FILLED
WITH GRAVEL."

PROVERBS XX. 1.



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169.

THE BREAD OF DECEIT.

PART FIRST.

YE SHALL NOT STEAL, NEITHER DEAL FALSELY,
NEITHER LIE ONE TO ANOTHER.—LEV. xix. 11.

WHILE the crime of theft, as defined by human laws, is abhorred by common consent in every civilized country, how many deviations from fair and open dealing are there, which men practice in their intercourse with each other, and gloss over by any plausible excuse that happens to serve their purpose! All such offences, whether they be great or small, are surely condemned by the spirit, if not by the letter of the eighth commandment. The common occurrence of dishonest dealings does not diminish their sinfulness. The heart of a man who is habitually unjust to his neighbour in word or deed, even in the most trifling matters, can

be right in the sight of heaven : he may escape detection by his fellow-men, and avoid the terrors of an earthly tribunal ; but he is not the less a thief and a liar in the eyes of his God.

These, and other reflections, weighed heavily on the mind of Ellen Chalmers, a young woman whose history I shall have occasion to trace in the following pages. She was the wife of a village carpenter, a man of active habits and good abilities as a workman, who resided within a short distance of Twickenham. Ellen was many years younger than her husband. She married at the early age of seventeen,—an imprudent thing for any girl to do, under ordinary circumstances ; for inexperience in the ways of the world always renders her liable to be deceived, and the cares and duties of the married state are forced upon her long before she is competent to discharge them in a proper manner. Ellen had the additional misfortune of uniting herself to a man of whose real character she was totally ignorant. In her youthful simplicity, she fancied he must be good-tempered because he was cheerful in company : but even Ellen ought to have

known that a regular attendance on public worship was not alone sufficient evidence of the religious sentiments of Mark Chalmers ; and that a superior kind of education did not necessarily lead to virtuous or honest principles. Ellen, however, like too many girls in the same situation, did take all these things, and some others, for granted, and having fully persuaded herself that Mark was everything she could wish, and consequently exactly calculated to make her happy, she became his wife after a very short acquaintance, and in the course of a twelvemonth afterwards the mother of two children, a twin boy and girl. These young creatures had nearly reached the age of twelve years when my narrative commences.

Mark Chalmers had undoubtedly received such an education as made him pass among those of his own rank for a good scholar ; while a rather superior understanding afforded him the means, humanly speaking, of becoming an honourable and useful member of society. Mark was in the habit of reading that volume, which to all classes is of equal importance, as containing the one only rule of Christian duty.

—the one only means of salvation. But to him it was not *profitable for instruction in righteousness*, for he perused its pages rather because he had been accustomed to do so from childhood, than from any sense of his own unworthiness, or any humble desire of being taught in divine things. In like manner, at the commencement and close of each day, he bent his knee before the throne of grace, but while he honoured God with his lips, his heart was habitually far from him; and yet with this heartless shadow of religion, like the presumptuous Pharisee in the parable, he accounted himself justified before God. Alas! for the deceitfulness of the human heart!—that heart which consulting its own worldly inclinations, can frame to itself a religion adapted to its corruptions, and yet profanely call itself the follower of Jesus Christ. Alas! for that heart, which can seek in mere lifeless forms and works, that justification, which the contrite believer, worshipping in *spirit and in truth*, finds is to be alone obtained through faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer!

In his ordinary dealings with mankind,

Mark Chalmers was guided by the accommodating morality of the world, rather than by the just and single-hearted precepts of the Gospel. His general principle seemed to be to avoid everything which was likely to expose him to open disgrace; for he feared the law, and he respected the opinion of the world exactly as it influenced his temporal prosperity. He abstained from directly meddling with his neighbour's goods, and was punctual in the payment of his debts; but at the same time, he was little scrupulous about taking unjust advantages in buying and selling, by imposing upon ignorant customers; and, having no regard for truth, he did not hesitate to bring falsehood to his assistance. Many a heart-ache had poor Ellen experienced from occurrences of this description, for she laboured to be truly honest in every sense of the word. Unlike her husband, she felt her own weakness in every effort for spiritual improvement, and anxiously and humbly besought strength and comfort from that source to which none can apply in vain. She asked in faith, and laid her burdens at the feet of Him who inviteth the weary and heavy-laden to

come unto him, and giveth them rest. She received the precepts of the Gospel in their plain, spiritual, and practical interpretation, and would not have held herself excused, had she followed the multitude in numberless matters considered venial in the way of trade. *Thou shalt not steal*, she used to say, *neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.* (Lev. xix, 11.)

The interior of Mark's cottage bore evident marks of his wife's neatness and industry. In early life she had served an apprenticeship with a straw-bonnet maker, an occupation which she pursued in a small way after her marriage, her uniformly fair and conscientious dealing always securing encouragement from the neighbouring trades-people. At the time my tale commences, Ellen was suffering from the effects of a severe illness, which had prevented her from exerting herself in an active manner for several weeks. On the day in question, she felt better than she had done for a long time, and having returned her fervent thanks to a merciful Providence for this as well as every other blessing, she rose from her arm-chair and with the assistance

of her husband, walked with a feeble step across the adjoining meadow. Two months had passed away since she had gazed upon the face of nature, except from the window of the chamber of sickness. Her feelings on the present occasion were such as may be conceived, but cannot be described: Spring in all its beauty was again gladdening the earth, and pouring forth her thousand treasures of young leaves and flowers all lovely and fragrant. The trees were expanding their delicate foliage to the warm sun: the tender grass was covering the pastures with that full deep green peculiar to that delightful season; and rich blossoms were starting forth as if by magic from beneath the shelter of every leaf; while thousands and tens of thousands of minute insects seemed to spring every instant into light and life, and dance in the bright sun-beam. Oh! how is it possible for any one to be insensible to a scene of this kind! to view with indifference the wonderful change from season to season! and above all, how much do they lose who in the contemplation of these things forget to raise their thoughts to their Divine Author,—to that

*God who crowneth the year with his goodness,
—in whom all creatures live and move and
have their being.*

‘The myrtle that decks the gay bower,
The herbage that springs from the sod,
Trees, plants, cooling fruits, and sweet flowers,
All rise to the praise of our God.’

While Ellen was silently acknowledging the influence of the cheerful prospect around her, she heard the voice of her son calling his father to the house, where a gentleman had looked in upon some business. Her husband therefore conducted her to a neat little garden adjoining his workshop. Here she seated herself in a little arbour, where in fine weather she had spent many happy hours: it was also a favourite haunt of her children, both of whom now hastened with expressions of delight to point out to her the numerous changes that had lately taken place. - They brought her the early violet, sweetest child of spring, and shewed her the apple and pear trees loaded with a dazzling profusion of blossoms. Every thing she saw through the rustic porch and its fringe of the young twining shoots

of honeysuckle, spoke of beauty, and mercy, and peace. Such too was the language it spoke to the heart of our invalid : but she had hardly time to indulge in reflections, excited by the scene before her, ere they were interrupted by the sound of her husband's voice in anger. She listened and could distinguish that he was engaged in a serious dispute with one of his customers. Knowing his temper to be at all times warm, and dreading lest in the present instance he should involve himself in some trouble, she rose hastily and walked towards the house ; but her praise-worthy intentions of acting the peace-maker were unavailing ; for just as she reached the threshold, a genteelly-dressed person was on the point of leaving it. She caught his last words ; "it is impossible," he said, "that such conduct can be overlooked ; you have corrupted my servant, Mr. Chalmers, and imposed upon me by every means in your power." Poor Ellen felt much hurt and disconcerted at this scene, though the above words rendered her in some measure acquainted with its cause. It happened a few months previous to this period,

that a young man of the name of Sanders became the inheritor of an estate in the vicinity: Chalmers had been frequently employed by the late proprietor, and he heard with great joy, that in addition to the many repairs which the house required, several alterations were projected by Mr. Sanders. He knew there would be sufficient work to keep him employed during the winter, and although an experienced workman would be necessary, he possessed too much confidence in his own abilities to suppose that he could fail in any case to satisfy his employer. Elated with these feelings, he waited upon Mr. Sanders and offered his services, alleging that he had always served the late proprietor, and that he should be happy to work for his successor at as reasonable a rate as any one in the country. Mr. Sanders finding this statement confirmed by a letter of recommendation from the man's landlord, a gentleman of considerable property, to whom he had been referred for an account of his qualifications, acceded to his application. All this seemed highly satisfactory, and the pride of our self-presumptuous carpenter increased considerably with his prospects.

As Chalmers was destitute of true religion, we ought not to be surprised at his confidence and vain glory. *The wicked through the pride of his countenance, says the Psalmist, will not seek after God : God is not in all his thoughts : his ways are always grievous ; thy judgments are far above out of his sight : as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved : for I shall never be in adversity.* (Psalm x. 4—6.) Prosperity hardened his heart instead of rendering him grateful and fearful of himself ; and this he evinced by his conduct towards Mr. Sanders. No sooner did he believe himself to be firmly established in the good opinion of that gentleman, than he began to think how he might take advantage of circumstances, or, in other words, ‘ make the most of him.’ He quickly ascertained him to be inexperienced in business, and careless in the management of his affairs, which he left chiefly under the controul of his butler and confidential servant. This man, whose name was Leeson, was too frequently ready to abuse his master’s confidence, and Chalmers was consequently sanguine as to the result

of his endeavours to win ~~his~~ favour. To discover his weak side was not difficult; as his consequential deportment, vain conversation, and selfish principles, rendered it sufficiently conspicuous. Chalmers therefore flattered him, and had recourse to every servile method of insinuation: the timely gift of a handsome inkstand, which the artful tradesman termed a specimen of his best workmanship, seemed to seal the tacit bond of iniquity, and Chalmers subsequently found the confidential domestic, in concurrence with his expectations, ready to connive at all those petty acts of imposition which a dishonest tradesman knows so well to how practise, but which it is the duty of an honest servant to detect. It is needless to specify particular examples,—using unseasoned timber, inventing obstacles to the progress of the buildings in order to lengthen his work, charging his own labour beyond the accustomed price of carpenter's work; these, and a hundred other means were resorted to, and passed unnoticed and unchecked before the eyes of Leeson. In this course they continued for nearly a year without exciting the least suspicion in the breast

of Mr. Sanders of the integrity of either party. Never calling to mind the inspired precept, *He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house, but he that hateth gifts shall live*, (Prov. xv. 27.) still less that *Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*, (Prov. xvi. 18.) their uniform success in their nefarious proceedings, seemed to inspire them with more and more confidence. Fortunately for Mr. Sanders, he had friends rather more sharp-sighted than himself, and who from real kindness were willing to counteract the evil consequences of his habitual negligence. Such a friend was an elderly gentleman of the name of Goodwin, who happened about this time to arrive on a visit to Mr. Sanders. He was fully aware of his young friend's carelessness, and with the true spirit of Christian charity, had been accustomed on various occasions to give him the benefit of his own experience, which he did in such an unpretending and judicious manner as to remove all appearance of superiority or interference. With this gentleman Mr. Sanders consulted freely on all his projects, and one thing leading to another, it was not long before the

system of imposition, above alluded to, was discovered, and most of its details exposed. Both culprits now appeared in their true colours. The effrontery with which they at first met the charge, forsook them when they found how completely their master and his friend had detected their proceedings. The result may readily be imagined ; Leeson the butler was immediately dismissed, and his discharge accompanied by the refusal of any future recommendation. Chalmers was treated in a similar manner, and told by Mr. Sanders that no consideration should induce him to again employ a systematically dishonest workman. To make this communication was the object of the visit of Mr. Sanders to the cottage, when, as we have already mentioned, he was met by Ellen at the door. We shall now resume our narrative from that time.

For some minutes after Ellen entered the room, her husband was too angry to give any rational account of what had happened. In the heat of resentment, he uttered all kinds of imprecations, and cursed the day when he first handled a tool in Mr. Sanders's service. To his poor wife who kindly implored him

not to offend God by using his name irreverently, he returned rude and angry replies. Ellen bore this disheartening conduct with her usual meekness. She had often proved the truth of the Scriptural saying, *a soft answer turneth away wrath*, (Prov. xv. 1.) and endeavoured on all occasions to act accordingly. Many a dispute had she terminated by her forbearance, especially with her husband; for dogged and perverse as he usually was when his temper was ruffled, his good sense taught him sooner or later to yield in some measure to his wife's conciliatory behaviour. In the present instance, she refrained from putting any more questions to him, and pouring forth her feelings in a silent petition to the throne of grace, waited patiently till he should be less under the influence of passion. In the course of another hour he became more calm, and entered upon a detail of what had happened. His sentiments, however, were unchanged, and his feelings were those of mortification, not contrition. His sorrow was the selfish sorrow of the world, and not that godly sorrow which worketh repentance. Chalmers, like other worldly persons, saw

the hand of God neither in prosperity nor adversity: like many, he was sufficiently candid to lament freely the evils he had drawn upon himself, but so far from expressing regret for the guilty conduct which occasioned them, he did not even think of tracing them to any such origin. Poor Ellen felt deeply impressed with this painful conviction. She could have submitted with the most cheerful resignation to the sacrifice of any earthly gain, had her husband but derived some spiritual profit by the warning; but alas! all here was dark; for though he would have replied indignantly if any one had questioned his right to the name of Christian, he was too wise in his own conceit to examine whether his thoughts and actions agreed with the pure spirit of that Gospel he professed to believe. Ellen could not help thinking of these things after her husband had left the room, and was very melancholy. Her children, however, soon joined her, and I shall take this opportunity of introducing them more particularly to our readers, and shall at the same time have an opportunity of shewing the effect of a parent's example upon his

children. Maurice Chalmers was a fine blooming boy, whose looks bespoke a considerable share of shrewdness and intelligence. His sister Hester, a slender, modest-looking little girl, with a countenance more interesting from its mildness of expression, than from any uncommon indication of acuteness of intellect. The looks of both children betrayed some recent disturbance.

"Hester, my dear," said the anxious mother, "what has been the matter? I have not seen you for these last two hours." The little girl blushed and hesitated, while her brother, smiling somewhat contemptuously at her confusion, replied,

"Hester is vexed, because I prevented her from injuring my father's business."

"That is not true, Maurice," said Hester, "you know I only meant to say what was right, and you called me a fool for doing so."

"Come, come, children," said their mother, "this language is not right under any circumstances. Let me know the occasion of this disagreement; but always remember, that railing against each other, and all rude speaking, is forbidden. Do you not reme

ber, my dear boy, what St. Paul says,—*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice,*" (Ephes. iv. 31.)

"I forgot that, to be sure," replied Maurice: "but indeed, mother, I could not help feeling angry, for she would have lost father the making of the rose-wood table if I had not been at hand to speak for him."

"I will speak for myself now, Maurice," replied Hester. "Dear mother, do you not always love those that speak the truth?"

"Yes, my dear, and God loves them too: for in his own holy word he has commanded every one to speak the truth. The Psalmist says, *I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love,* (Psalm cxix. 163): St. Paul also tells us, *Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*" (Col. iii. 9.)

"I remember those texts, mother," said Hester, "and was ready to speak the truth when some ladies called about half an hour since, to ask if father had finished the rose-wood table for Mrs. Bird. I knew he was out, and answered to the best of my knowledge,

that I believed the table had scarcely been put in hand. Just then, Maurice, who was nailing the currant bushes, overheard me, and throwing down his hammer, asked the ladies if it was the little square rose-wood table they were speaking of, at the same time giving me a pinch, as if I had said something wrong. One of the ladies replied, 'Yes, a little rose-wood table ordered by Mrs. Bird.' Oh! then, said Maurice, it is partly finished, and if you please I will inform my father that you wish it to be sent home this week. The ladies then wanted to see it, but my brother having left us for a few moments, to see, as he said, whether the shop-door was open, returned and informed them that it was locked. The ladies seemed perfectly satisfied, and charging Maurice to deliver the message to my father, went away. But their backs were scarcely turned, when he began to laugh at them for having been so easily taken in, and said he would tell my father what a simpleton I had been."

"Maurice, what have you to say to this account?" demanded his mother.

"I did not mean to tell tales: I only

threatened to let my father know, in order that she might be more sharp in future."

"What do you mean by sharpness, Maurice? there is no want of sharpness, that I can see, in Hester's conduct upon this occasion."

"Dear mother, why my father has not begun the table; and if I had said so, or shown the ladies into the shop when there was nothing to see, they would have been disappointed, and would have employed somebody else to make their table."

"That may be very possible, Maurice; but did you reflect at what price you purchased their forbearance, and what you gave in order to secure your father this trifling piece of work?"

"I do not understand you, mother," replied Maurice.

"My dear boy, you were content to offend the greatest of all beings, in order to please a fellow-creature. You knew that God had absolutely commanded you not to tell a lie on any account, and yet you disobeyed him; nor is it a single sin that you have committed. You heard what your sister first said to the

ladies, and you knew that she spoke truth : by contradicting her you told the first lie : you then told a second lie when you mentioned that the table was in hand : you told a third lie, when you said that the shop-door was locked. You were also wicked enough to ridicule the ladies for believing you ; you committed the dreadful crime of endeavouring to corrupt your sister, by laughing at her love for truth, and thereby turning into contempt the express commandment of Almighty God."

" Oh mother, I hope God will not be angry with me for speaking as I did,—I do not mean for what I did to Hester, for I know it was wrong to call her names, and I am sorry for it,—but what I said about the table did nobody any harm, and was of real use to my father."

" My dear Maurice, how can you talk so lightly of a lie ? It matters not by whom a lie is told, for what purpose it is told, or the end for which it is told ; it is still a lie. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord.* (Prov. xii. 22.) We are expressly forbidden by the word of God to *do evil that good may come*.

(Rom. iii. 8.) If you, Maurice, continue in so sinful a habit, you are old enough to know the consequences. You know that in another world, all will be either rewarded or punished. You know too, that life is so uncertain, that the youngest persons, as well as the oldest, are often summoned to another state of existence at a moment's warning. You have this day, Maurice, sinned in the sight of God, for mere worldly gain; but the Bible says, *what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.*" (Mark viii. 36.)

"Dear mother, I think—I believe—I see I have done wrong; and that God must be angry with me; but I do not know how it is, I cannot help sometimes saying things that are not quite true. I am sure I do not wish to tell lies, but if I try ever so much, I cannot always say just what is right."

"That I can easily believe, my dear son, if you trust to the strength of your own resolutions, which you seem to have done. I have often explained to you from the Bible, that all mankind, since the fall of our first parents, are born in sin; *As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.* (Rom. iii. 10.)

A sinful creature can of himself do nothing rightly. Turn, therefore, to that Saviour who came into the world to save sinners. Believe on him, pray to God through him for grace to strengthen and guide you in the path of holiness. Let riches and all worldly advantages be held as nothing in comparison with the smallest sin ; and to return to the occasion of the present conversation, do not forget that *the getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.*" (Prov. xxi. 6.)

"What is meant by a *vanity tossed to and fro?*" asked Hester.

"The attention with which you listen to my instructions, my dear Hester, makes it a pleasure to answer your questions. The text means, that profits or advantages obtained by dishonesty or any wicked means, are vain, uncertain, and insecure ; I will remind you of an example which will enable you to understand its application more perfectly. Do you remember your father telling us one evening what happened to that gentleman who kept so many servants, and whom every body thought to be so rich ? "

"Oh! yes, mother," answered Maurice; "you mean the person who was hanged for forgery."

"I do; and does not this illustrate the truth of the text? That unhappy man acquired his riches by dishonest practices. In the pride of his heart he bought a fine house and costly furniture, and lived as though he had said—*Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* (Luke xii. 19.) But how briefly were all his prospects terminated! How suddenly was his soul required of him in the midst of his presumptuous security! In an hour when he thought not, some trivial circumstance brought his hidden deeds to light, and his great wealth was traced to a criminal origin. In a few hours his fine house was exchanged for a prison, and in the course of a few weeks his life was forfeited to the laws of his country. See how, in his case, *the getting of treasures by a lying tongue proved to be a vanity tossed to and fro, of them that seek death.*"

Both children seemed to be deeply impressed with what they had heard, and pro-

mised their mother to think more of these things, and to pray to God for the assistance of his Holy Spirit to keep them from all evil ways. Maurice, however, was not so humble-minded as his sister; and after the seriousness left upon him by his mother's conversation had somewhat abated, he still tried to justify himself as far as he could. This was evident from what took place the following morning, as soon as Ellen found herself alone with her children.

"I have been thinking over all that happened yesterday, mother," began Maurice, "and believe I was not quite so bad as I made myself appear at first. I said the table was in hand, but that did not imply how far it was in hand. I believe my father *has* laid aside the wood for it. And when I informed the ladies that the door was locked, it certainly was so, for I locked it myself, and put the key in my pocket: so you see that I told half the truth at all events."

"Ah! Maurice, Maurice," replied his mother, "I am grieved to hear you excuse yourself in this manner, after all that I said to you yesterday on the subject. I am sure

you have sense enough to know that you may tell a lie while your words are literally true. If you succeed in deceiving a person by such words, you have conveyed to his mind a falsehood. Deceit is a species of lie, and they who use it, are aware that it is so, as is sufficiently proved by the care and management necessary to render it successful. When you locked the door, and put the key in your pocket, and told the ladies it was locked, your words might be true; but the impression you *wished* to convey, and *did* convey to them, was, that neither you nor they had the means of getting in; this was a lie; your own conscience told you it was, and you were wicked enough to glory in it, when you saw it had succeeded. I wonder that you do not tremble at thus wilfully scorning the commandments of God. Think of God's judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira; *they* too told half the truth, or rather did not tell the whole truth: they lied unto God, and were struck with death. I am glad, my son, to see you blush, and I trust I shall never hear you again attempt to justify any conduct save that which is open, honest, and pleasing

in the sight of heaven. Hester, my dear, tell me now, why did you keep silence when you saw that the ladies were deceived ? ”

“ I was ashamed to speak,” said Hester.

“ Ashamed, Hester ? Ashamed to bear witness to the truth ? My dear little girl, do you remember our Saviour’s own words, *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.* (Mark viii. 30). The shame that suffers you to stand by and see another deceived or defrauded, is a false shame. Pray to God, my dear child, that you may be enabled to struggle against it. Can you tell me how God expects us to behave towards our neighbour ? ”

“ *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* (Matt. xxii. 39). And our blessed Lord says also, *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets.*” (Matt. vii. 12.)

“ Very well, my dear, you cannot answer better than in the words of Scripture, which teach us our duty in the plainest manner.

And now consider what kind of feeling that is which suffers us to become a partner in a dishonest act by concealing it;—it certainly is not Christian love. Should Christian and brotherly conduct expose you at any time to the ridicule or even censure of ungodly people, forget not the promises of our divine Master, who will bless them who suffer for conscience' sake. *For this is thankworthy* says St. Peter, *if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully* (1 Peter ii. 19). *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*" (1 Peter iii. 12)

"I will not forget this, indeed, mother," said Hester. "I will learn these texts by heart, that I may not lose sight of them: and when I say my prayers this evening, I will pray that God may give me grace to endure anything for his sake."

The entrance of their father put a stop to this interesting conversation, though it furnished those who took a part in it, particularly Ellen, with materials for much reflection. This conversation, indeed, forms an important

part in my history ; and those alone who are conversant with the manners and habits of children can be fully aware how strongly circumstances are frequently associated with remarks made upon them, and in this manner fasten praise or censure on the mind when it would otherwise produce but a temporary impression. In this manner, bread, thrown as it were upon the waters, is returned after many days.

The characters of our young friends, Maurice and Hester, demanded great watchfulness on the part of their parents. They were equally liable to fall into the same errors, but from very opposite causes. Maurice was clever and aspiring, capable of reflection on the nature of good and evil, of a sanguine and generous temperament ; but from his volatility easily induced to sacrifice duty in the immediate pursuit of the object of the moment ; and though he lamented his want of resolution, was again ready to yield to the next temptation. Hester was timid to a fault, of an affectionate disposition, but with so little natural energy of character, that she was frequently induced to act in a manner

contrary to the dictates of her conscience, rather than encounter difficulties or vexations. But on such occasions she suffered more pain and repented more sincerely than her brother. Many a time did Ellen ponder in her heart the dispositions of her children, and study how to mould them according to the will of her heavenly Father. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*, said this good mother to herself; God will not be served by halves, neither will he suffer us to *halt between two opinions*. If we wish to be partakers of his glorious promises, we must serve him with all our mind and strength; we must come out and be separated from all worldly things that oppose themselves—but oh! how difficult, and how impossible, without his grace to strengthen our weakness!

As soon as Maurice and Hester had retired to rest, she tried to introduce the subject nearest her heart to her husband. “Don’t you make that son of mine too good,” said Mark, after listening to his wife’s account of the recent occurrence; “he is a fine sharp lad, and has his wits always about him, I should be sorry if he were to lose them.”

"But, my dear Mark"—"I know what you are going to say," said he, interrupting her, "you are afraid that because I would overlook a white lie, I should permit him to take a false oath and do other bad things: no, no, Ellen, trust me, I will look well after him."

"God grant it, dear husband," replied Ellen, fervently, for whenever I hear of white lies, I think of my dear father and mother's sentiments on that subject."

"And what were their sentiments?" said Mark, somewhat sullenly; "it is a pity they died before you and I became acquainted."

"Our loss was their gain, I firmly trust," returned Ellen, her eyes filling with tears at the recollection of her deceased parents; "I thank God, I sorrow not as those who have no hope. But in regard to speaking truth, they used to say that, they who were not scrupulous about it in trifles, were not fit to be trusted in more important matters. I recollect I once justified myself for some deviation from truth, on the ground that it was only a white lie. 'By a white lie,' observed my father, 'I suppose you mean an *innocent* or a *harmless* lie; but in the holy Scriptures,

where lying is expressly condemned, we find no such distinctions. *No lie whatever can be harmless ; we may not do evil that good may come.*' Since I have been able to judge for myself, I am convinced of the truth of my dear father's words. It is certain that no person becomes wicked all at once ; and as far as lying is concerned, white lies, as they are called, lead directly to those which in the accommodating language of the world are called black."

"That lying in general is sinful, I do not seek to deny," said her husband, "but I think you carry the matter too far. I have read the Scriptures and have not forgotten the examples of Ananias and Sapphira, or Naaman and Gehazi. But you will please to remember that there are on the other hand some instances among God's chosen people, in which fraud and deceit were practised. How did Jacob obtain his old blind father's blessing ? answer me that."

"Indeed, Mark, I do not see any difficulty in this case, since both Jacob and Rebekah suffered dearly for their falsehood. God did not hold forth the people he graciously chose

to fulfil his peculiar purpose, as patterns to be imitated in all things. We know that some were guilty of the deepest crimes and were punished by God himself, although they belonged to the nation he had chosen. Almost all of those who passed through the Red Sea were impatient and disobedient; and though God in his mercy bore with them, we must not be impious enough to say that he was satisfied with them, or that *we* may be disobedient because *they* were."

"God, however, permitted Jacob to gain an advantage over his elder brother," replied Mark.

"Yes," said his wife, "and so it was prophesied; for God revealed to Rebekah, before the birth of her children, that *the elder should serve the younger*; but we no where find that Jacob's conduct met with God's approbation. It is clear however, that Rebekah's anxiety to see the prophecy realized, urged her to very sinful measures. Jacob, indeed, obtained his father's blessing by a lie; but instead of being treated as the heir of the promise, he was in a manner driven from his home, and to save his life forsook his parents, whom he

never afterwards saw. He was obliged to travel several hundred miles without any one to comfort him or direct him in his wanderings ; and even his uncle Laban, with whom he found refuge, treated him unkindly. Oh ! Mark, these things are written for our learning, and if we receive them rightly are *profitable for instruction in righteousness.*"

" Well, I grant," said Mark, "that Jacob and Rebekah did suffer for their fault. But what do you say to Abraham, called the father of the faithful, who desired his wife on two occasions to pass herself off as his sister ?"

" I can only say what I said before," replied Ellen, "that such proofs of the frailty of our nature are to be lamented, but not imitated ; and that the best are not free from sin. Are we not told that there is none righteous in this world, no, not one ? And we find that Scripture records the failings as well as the virtues of its holy characters. You will recollect, that God reproved falsehood, when Sarah denied having laughed at the promise of a son in her old age."

" Well, you have a word to say for them all," said Mark, rising hastily from his chair,

for he began to feel, (and not for the first time) that with all his knowledge, he was no match for his wife in spiritual things and understanding of the Holy Scriptures : "but it is getting late and our fire is low, so we had better close the subject for this night. I only wish that the children should be taught to act for themselves, and to make their own way in the world."

"With God's help, I trust they will," answered Ellen.

"Well, then, leave Maurice to me, and I will take care that he be no disgrace to us ; it would be all the better for Hester, I must say, if she had a little more of her brother's spirit."

Thus ended for the present all Ellen's prospects of awakening her husband to a more spiritual sense of his duties. She had found him as self-satisfied as ever, and with a sorrowful heart she recollected the proverb, *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is more hope of a fool than of him.* (Prov. xxvi. 12). Oh ! what would she not have given, to have seen the father of her children humble and distrustful of himself, and, renouncing all vain notions of his own merit,

going on his way in faith, with fear and trembling.

The next morning happened to be the first of May, and was joyfully ushered in by all the children of the village. According to a custom prevalent in many parts of England, it was the scene of many festivities. Many had gone out at day-break to procure branches of may or hawthorn, and indeed, on this occasion, a large party paraded the town soon after three o'clock in the morning, singing the 'Mayer's Song.' Their principal object was to affix branches to the doors of almost all the respectable inhabitants. The larger the branch is that is placed at the door, the more honourable to the house, or rather to the servants of the house. If in the course of the year, a servant has given offence to any of the mayers, then, instead of a branch of may, a branch of elder with a bunch of nettles is affixed to that door: this is considered a great disgrace, and the unfortunate subject of it is exposed to the jeers of her rivals. On May morning, therefore, the girls look with some anxiety for their may-branch, and rise very early to ascertain their good or ill-fortune.

Early on this day, while the smooth sward was still moist and glittering with the morning dew, appeared a number of merry children, decked out with ribbons, flowers, and every mark of sportive finery they could muster. In this happy group were Maurice and Hester Chalmers, who, as the party moved briskly across the Twickenham meadows, lost no opportunity of playfully accosting every passing stranger and soliciting the accustomed tribute of the day.

"See, Hester," said one of her companions, who was somewhat before the rest, and who was the purse-bearer of the little party, "there is a gentleman helping a lady into a carriage with four horses ; I am sure he looks very good-natured ; make haste or they will be gone."

Away ran Hester with all her might ; she sprang nimbly over the stile and across the adjacent road, and reached the carriage, breathless with exertion, just as the gentleman was ascending the steps. Afraid to address him at this moment, the little girl drew back, casting at the same time a hasty glance at the young lady already seated in

the carriage. "Stop one moment, papa," exclaimed the latter, raising herself feebly to look at Hester, "I am sure that little girl wants something."

"What little girl, and what does she want," demanded the gentleman, instantly turning round.

"Only the first of May, sir, if you please," said Hester, blushing, and smiling.

"Oh! I need not have inquired your errand, I perceive," returned the gentleman, good-humouredly, as he surveyed the flowers that ornamented her dress! "here," continued he, putting some silver into her hand, "this is for yourself and party, so run away, and do not ask of me again to-day."

Hester needed not the former injunction, for scarcely had she received the donation, and dropped a low curtsy, than with every expression of delight, she bounded off so rapidly, that in the next moment she was out of sight. Her return was joyfully hailed by her young companions who did not anticipate so favourable a result.

"And who is this gentleman; does he live at Twickenham?" inquired one of the children.

"He must be a very rich man, to drive four horses of his own," said another.

"Some great duke, perhaps," exclaimed a third.

"No, no," replied Hester, "he seemed to be a bishop, such as preached the charity-sermon last Sunday."

"That was a different gentleman, though," observed a lad belonging to the party, who was the son of a butcher at Twickenham. "This person *is* a bishop, as Hester supposed, and I can tell you every thing about him, because I carried him a piece of beef this morning."

"Did you indeed," said Hester; "he lives at Twickenham then? tell me all about him, Charles."

"Well, I tell you I carried him a piece of beef this morning, and to-morrow he is to have a quarter of lamb."

"Oh, never mind your beef and lamb," rejoined Hester, laughing; "I do not care about what he eats; I want to know his name, and where he lives, and how long he has been here."

"You should have more patience then, if

you want to know so many things," replied Charles, a little nettled at being thus interrupted in the middle of his story ; " where should he live but at the house where you saw his carriage."

" I beg your pardon," said Hester, " I did not at all mean to spoil your story ; but that house is not his own, surely ?"

" Nobody said it was," retorted Charles, laughing in his turn ; " you might answer that question yourself I imagine, if you would just give yourself time to think a moment."

" Oh ! I do remember," resumed Hester, " that the house belongs to the captain who went to sea last February ; and as it was to be let, I suppose the bishop has taken it."

" You have supposed very truly, this time," replied Charles. " He has had the house about a fortnight : and now as you are so very, very, anxious about him, I will tell you all I know."

" Oh, pray do," cried half a dozen of the children at once. " And first for his name," said Hester.

" I have some objection to that," replied

Charles, looking very wise ; " that is, I do not know it myself. But I do know, that he has taken the captain's house for a year, in order that his daughter may have the benefit of country air and London doctors. I hear people say she is very ailing and not likely to recover."

" Ah ! poor thing, that nice young lady I saw in the carriage, I dare say ; I am very sorry for her," said Hester.

At this moment, up came Maurice. " What is all this about," he exclaimed, playfully tapping his sister on the shoulder : " you two make pretty beggars ! here you have been chattering for the last ten minutes, without looking right or left, and leaving us to run after the gentlefolk ! "

" See if I do not make up for lost time," said Charles ; and off he scampered after a party of ladies he espied turning a corner of the street ; and happening to be successful, regained his reputation. Many other little events occurred during the day, and many alternations of good and bad fortune, interesting to those immediately concerned, but not equally so to others ; we shall therefore pass

them over and content ourselves with narrating an incident which happened in the evening, because it assists us in developing the characters of Maurice and Hester, and is besides not destitute of interest in itself. When the grey tints and lengthening shadows of evening seemed likely to put a stop to the exertions of the young people, the leader of one of the youthful bands, now somewhat exhausted by the liveliness of their own spirits, beat a halt. "We may as well turn homeward," he said; "the little ones are so tired they can hardly walk, and we have not taken sixpence amongst us during the last hour."

"There are so many parties besides ours," added another, "that the gentlefolks are tired of giving; we shall not get a penny more."

"I will make one trial more, however," said Maurice, as he watched an elderly gentleman who was speaking to a poor woman. Seizing the favourable moment, he went forward accompanied by his companions. Hester, who was among the number present, immediately recognized the good-natured bishop.

"Go away, my lad," said the reverend

speaker, "I have given to many of you this morning, and to your party doubtless among the rest."

"No, sir, indeed it was not," urged the unblushing young applicant.

"Well then, here is a penny for you, now go, for I am in a hurry."

"Thank you, my lord," said Maurice, and pulled off his hat as the bishop passed on.

"Brother," said Hester eagerly, "he did give to our party; run after him and tell him so; he is the bishop."

"Hush, hush!" "replied Maurice, in an under tone, "I know he is the bishop; did you not hear me call him, my lord?"

"But you said, he had not given our party anything," interrupted Hester; "you forgot he gave me two shillings this morning."

"What is that to me? he did not know I belonged to the same party."

"But he *shall* know it," replied Hester, seizing the penny with so unusual an air of decision, that her brother was quite unprepared to offer any resistance; then to his increased amazement she darted off with the small but unjustly acquired treasure, and

overtook the bishop opposite to the door of his own house. Partly excited by the impulse of the moment, and still more by the consciousness of doing a right action, the little girl forgot her natural timidity. She stepped forward with a countenance glowing with honest animation, but its expression was somewhat damp when the bishop, mistaking her object, motioned her away, saying, "go, go, little girl, you are too importunate; you belong to the same party which accosted me a few moments ago." But Hester was not so easily repulsed.

"Oh, hear me but for one moment, sir," she cried, in so earnest a manner, that the bishop turned on the threshold. "You did give to our party, sir, and here is the penny you gave to Maurice."

"Stop, my dear," exclaimed the benevolent speaker, observing the child on the point of running away, after presenting him with the humble, but not the less exemplary token of her honesty; "I must detain you in my turn, for I do not exactly know what you mean. Did you imagine I had lost this penny?"

"No, sir, I mean, my lord," said Hester,



suddenly recollecting her brother's distinction, "but, if you please to remember, you gave it to Maurice a little while ago, because he said you had given our party nothing to-day."

"Well, my little girl, and what then?"

"You gave me two shillings this morning, so I brought the penny back; that is all, sir."

"Are you sure I gave you two shillings this morning? I have had so many little petitioners of your description to day, I really cannot remember your face in particular."

"But I am quite sure of it, my lord: you gave them to me this morning when your carriage was at the door, and a young lady who looked very poorly was sitting in it."

"Ah! that is quite sufficient," returned the bishop; "I remember you perfectly now: what is your name, my dear?"

"Hester Chalmers, my lord?"

"And where do you live?"

"We live at a cottage on the Hampton-road, with a honeysuckle and ivy porch."

"What is your father's employment?"

“He is a carpenter, if you please, my lord.”

Whilst she was speaking, the bishop inserted her name and place of abode in his note-book, and then said, “you are an honest little girl I perceive, by your conduct in this instance : you did your duty in giving me this money : I return it as a gift, knowing that you will receive it with double pleasure, from the consciousness of having acted rightly. And now I recommend you to go home, for it is growing dark, and little girls should never play late in the streets ; good-night, my dear.”

Hester, curtsying and turning from the bishop, hastened to rejoin her companions, who flocked around her with great eagerness to hear the result of her second interview with the bishop, which when detailed, met with the warm approbation of the greater part of her auditors. Even Maurice forbore to express any contrary sentiments, when he found the penny was not lost. This was the last adventure of the day, and our little party dispersed immediately afterwards.

We think it right to mention that the affair of the penny soon came to the ears of the parents of Maurice and Hester. The latter

however, was not one to speak of a circumstance that involved her brother in blame. Strange to say, it was Maurice himself, who, talkative and communicative, informed them of the principal particulars, but I grieve to say, coloured them in such a manner, as to exclude himself from any intentional fault. Hester was silent, and Maurice's representation deceived his parents. Did the unhappy boy not call to mind, that there was one Being whom he could not deceive? *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall he not know?* (Psalm xciv. 9, 10.)

An interval of nearly a week elapsed without the occurrence of any thing worthy of notice, except the increased indisposition of Ellen, who experienced a relapse, which threatened to produce serious effects upon her already enfeebled constitution. Her husband was much alarmed, and having an only sister resident with some relations in London, he wrote to request that she would come and nurse his wife, who was in so precarious a

state as to require a more constant and experienced attendant than her little girl.

Catherine Chalmers readily acceded to her brother's wish. She was an industrious kind-hearted young woman, sincerely attached to Ellen, and extremely anxious to contribute to her comfort. Her affectionate attentions were duly appreciated by Ellen, who in the midst of all her sufferings, preserved that tranquillity of mind which can flow from nothing but a steadfast reliance on the faithful promises and atoning blood of our blessed Redeemer. She neither sought to deceive, nor desired to be deceived, respecting the probable issue of her disorder, and testified her thankfulness for all the goodness of God, and her submission to his divine will, by her cheerfulness, and ready acquiescence in every thing thought proper for her situation. When Catherine was assisting her to rise one morning, after a few hours refreshing sleep, she observed, "How can I sufficiently thank God for all his mercies ! how tenderly does he suit our trials to our weakness ! When I laid down last night, I thought over all the blessings I enjoy, and those innumer-

able comforts, of which so many more desiring than myself feel the want. I may truly say, *The Lord has done great things for me.*"

"Dear Sister," said Catherine, in a more serious tone of voice than usual, "how often have I longed, during the last fortnight, to lay open my feelings to you, and to talk with you concerning things of which I am sadly ignorant."

"Speak openly, dear Catherine," said Ellen, "I am most willing to converse on any subject so interesting to you."

"Oh! but you will be shocked at my ignorance. You know how well I can read, and I assure you I never pass a Sunday without going to Church and reading a chapter in the Bible, and yet I do not know holy things as I ought, for I am not comforted, and if any affliction makes me reflect at all seriously, I am perplexed with doubts and difficulties."

Ellen looked seriously and affectionately in her sister-in-law's face; she took her hand, and pressing it between her's, said in a sweet and low voice:—"Catherine, I think I understand you; God give me grace to be a

Christian friend to you, and make me the blessed means of leading you to that peace which is the gift of Christ to all that truly believe on him."

"Ellen," resumed Catherine, "you must listen to me, while I go back a little. I used to persuade myself that I was in as good a state, in regard to religious matters, as was requisite to insure salvation. I knew that when I was baptized, I was admitted a member of the Church of Christ, and was desirous in my after life not to disgrace the Christian profession. I felt certain that every one that knew me would speak in favour of my respectability. Last year, however, when a severe illness reduced me, as it were, to the brink of the grave, I began to fear that my religion was not of the right kind. I could perceive, as I lay on what I thought was to be my death-bed, that I had, after all, accommodated my notions of religion to my worldly views, and that I had often been more faithful to my earthly than my heavenly master: I became, in short fully convinced that I had never made religion my first consideration;—that I had indeed given God as little of my

heart as I dared to do ; and oh ! Ellen, I became very, very unhappy. It pleased God that I should recover, and as my strength returned, my feelings of remorse became less acute ; I tried to convince myself that these fears about the state of my soul had been nothing more than the result of bodily weakness. But I have never regained the feeling of security in which I lived before that illness, and since I have been with you, I have longed more than ever to know that principle of comfort and cheerful resignation which never seems to forsake you."

"That heavenly consolation is open to all, my dearest sister," said Ellen, "who seek the aid of that Being who *giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.*" (James i. 5.)

"Ah ! but Ellen, there is another matter ; I fear I do not understand even the proper way to seek that aid. Every day convinces me that I am not nearly so good as yourself, yet when you were talking to the clergyman who visited you yesterday, you said you considered all that you had been enabled to do, as falling far short of your duty, and that

you attributed no merit whatsoever to any thing you could do : alas ! then, what hope can there be for me ! ”

“ There could indeed be no hope either for you, or me, or any one else, my dear Catherine, if we rested our salvation upon our own good works, fallen as we are from original righteousness. No, dear sister, we must look to the sacrifice on the Cross,—to the redeeming blood and all-sufficient merits of our Saviour Christ for justification, pardon, and salvation.”

“ I know,” resumed Catherine, “ that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save sinners. But Ellen,” added she, hesitatingly, “ do you mean to say that we have fallen from *all* our original righteousness, and that we can do *nothing* good in the sight of God.”

“ What I say, Catherine, is the doctrine of the holy Scriptures. You know that our first parents were created pure and holy, and that in consequence of their fall, sin entered into the world, and that all mankind are in the same condemnation.”

“ That we are suffering from the fall of our first parents, I do believe,” replied Catherine, “ but I do not see why we should at the same

time be incapable of performing a single good action."

"We must be either *holy* in our nature, or *sinful* in our nature," answered Ellen:—"now when Adam and Eve ceased to be the former, they became the latter, and all their descendants consequently inherit a sinful nature, in other words, they are naturally depraved, or to use the language of Scripture, are born in sin. (Psalm li. 5.)

"But, dear Ellen, cannot we do some good things in spite of our sinful nature? Some people are honest; some are dishonest; some commit murder; others swear and lie, and are guilty of all manner of crimes, while many support irreproachable characters; are all these alike? Are they all equally wicked?"

"Not in one sense, my dear Catherine; you have described both good and bad moral characters; but the man who bears the fairest moral character in this kingdom, has no better claim to the kingdom of heaven than the murderer, the swearer, and the liar you have mentioned. This may seem to be a hard doctrine, but you must recollect that we are speaking of spiritual things,—of the state of the soul. It

is possible for a wise heathen to be a good moral character; and even in a Christian country, a man may refrain from being a drunkard from regard to his health;—from swearing, because it is unfashionable;—and from stealing or murdering, because he is afraid of the law. You will admit that a man may do all this from other inducements than love to God?"

"I cannot deny it, Ellen; and confess I never looked at the subject in this view before."

"It follows, therefore," continued Ellen, "that with a depraved nature in a spiritual sense, we may be good moral characters in the eyes of the world. Now, that we can do no good thing of our own strength to render us acceptable in the sight of God, is clear from every part of Scripture. *God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.* (Psalm liii. 2, 3.) *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know*

it? (Jer. xvii. 9.) Even St. Paul says, *For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not.* (Rom. vii. 18.) And in the next chapter we find the reason: *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be* (Rom. viii. 7.) If we carefully examine our own hearts, dear Catherine, and our motives, and how far they agree with the pure spirit of the Gospel, we shall find sufficient cause to deplore the worldly-mindedness and evil imaginations that prevail in them."

"That is too true, Ellen; the more I have looked into mine, (and I have latterly endeavoured to do so) I grieve to say the more corrupt and deceitful I have found it: my motives have all been of a worldly nature,—my good actions have always had some reference to my temporal interests."

"Do not grieve, my dear sister, that you have discerned the real state of your heart; but rather thank God that he has given you grace to see its natural corruption, and to feel the necessity of a change which is beyond

your own power. I trust *that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.*" (Philippians i. 6.)

Ellen ceased. She had spoken with much fervency, and now felt somewhat exhausted. The tears had started into Catherine's eyes during the last sentence, and she felt comforted; but it was a comfort associated with so much humility and distrust of herself that she could only say in her heart, *God be merciful to me, a sinner!* Yet she began to feel that a way was opened to her. She looked upon her sister, her eyes were closed, and her lips moved gently as if in inward prayer. Catherine felt that she was the subject of her sister's petitions, and she became still more softened; the tears trickled down her cheeks; she sunk upon her knees and hid her face in her sister's lap as she threw her arms around her. Ellen embraced her affectionately, and after a few minutes resumed the subject.—

"How can we, poor, weak, human creatures," said she, "be sufficiently grateful to our heavenly Father for his goodness to his erring children,—for giving his only Son to be a sacrifice for our sins! Without this wonder-

ful atonement, what would have become of us! How affectingly is the redemption of the human race spoken of, throughout the Scriptures! *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* (Isaiah liii. 4.) *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* (1 John iv. 10.) You believe this, I know, Catherine; but perhaps you have not fully considered the means by which you may appropriate to yourself individually, the benefit of Christ's death."

"I fear I have not," replied Catherine.

"These means are described in one word, *faith*; for *without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* (Heb. xi. 6.) Remember I do not mean any thing more by the word *means* than what is expressed in the above text, for salvation is freely given,

and quite independently of any qualifications on our part. Jesus Christ said, *verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* (John vi. 40.) Again, *I am the resurrection and the life : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.* (John xi. 25, 26.) This, then, is the justifying faith whereby alone we can be saved ;—the faith of which St. James said, *I will shew thee my faith by my works.*” (James ii. 18.)

“ And how is a sinner to obtain this faith, Ellen ? ”

“ By prayer, Catherine, by humble supplication, upon the strength of the assurances of the Gospel ; *ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you.* (Matt. vii. 7.) And again, *him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* (John vi. 37.) Study the holy Scriptures ; cry out with the father of the sick child, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief,* (Mark ix. 24.) and endeavour to resist your remaining unbelief. God has promised not to break the bruised reed nor quench the

smoking flax, (Matt. xii. 20.) but, *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* (Psalm lxxxvi. 13.) *He is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and full of mercy.*" (Psalm cxlv. 8.)

Thus ended, on the present occasion, the conversation between the two sisters.

On the following morning Catharine was rejoiced to find that Ellen had not suffered from her exertions; and being encouraged by the latter to speak freely, she was not slow in availing herself of the opportunity to continue the conversation of the preceding day. "Sister," she began, "I have been thinking of what a cousin of mine once said to me, that if Christ died for the sins of all mankind, there was no necessity for righteousness on our part; this, surely, cannot be the case, and yet there is something in the question I do not quite understand."

"The expression made use of, Catharine, was not a good one. Christ did unquestionably die for the sins of the whole world; and if you recollect, it is said that he *will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* (1 Tim. ii. 4.) If we say

there is a necessity for righteousness on our part, before we can appropriate to ourselves the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, we say what is quite contrary to Scripture; for no one *can* render himself righteous. It is by faith in our blessed Redeemer, alone, that we are saved, as I mentioned yesterday. No man can merit heaven by any thing he can do; *for by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*" (Ephes. ii. 8, 9.)

"But good works are required of us," said Catharine.

"Most certainly," replied Ellen, "but good works neither justify nor entitle us to any thing. They are the immediate and inseparable consequence of a lively faith in Jesus Christ, as much as a sincere repentance and detestation of our former sins. Good works are the *evidence* of our faith, and therefore cannot *precede* it. The righteousness, too, whereby we are saved, is not our own righteousness, but that of Christ, and on it we are required to rest our hopes. Thus the Psalmist says: *I will go in the strength of the*

Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. (Psalm lxxi. 16.) St. Paul also; 'for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Rom. x. 4.) And again; That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Philip. iii. 9.)

"I feel the force of your remarks, Ellen, and the truth of the doctrines you have been so good as to explain. I see that good works or a holy life must *necessarily* accompany true faith in Christ."

"I am truly glad, dear Catherine, and thank God, if what I have been enabled to say, has led you to take a right view of these important things. But I myself, Catherine, have much need of instruction, and dare not presume to be a teacher of others. Search therefore that blessed book, which has enabled me, by the grace of God, to support many afflictions and taught me to be grateful for many undeserved mercies; which daily convinces me of my own unworthiness, and

of the extent of the inestimable sacrifice on the cross. O pray to God that for the sake of his dear Son, he will shed upon you more and more of his Holy Spirit, that you may understand those *holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ.*" (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

"I humbly trust that God will give me his grace to do so. I am truly ashamed to look back upon the manner in which I treated that holy book. I read it with a careless and a cold heart. Oh! I have much to be thankful for, and God has been very merciful to me."

"I guessed your manner of reading the Bible, sister, from something you said at the commencement of our conversation yesterday."

"How so?" inquired Catharine; "if I recollect, I said that I had been in the habit of reading it regularly."

"So you did, but you gave me reason to imagine that you read it, not so much from a wish to study its meaning, as from a habit you thought right, and most probably had acquired in childhood."

"You are right, Ellen, to my shame again be it spoken; I certainly read the Scriptures as a task, and when I closed the book, I fancied I had done enough, though before my illness I am sure I often closed it as ignorant as before I opened it."

"That will not be the case in future, I trust," said Ellen, gently. "Read some portion daily, Catherine; it is a grievous mistake to suppose that our religious exercises may be confined to the sabbath; make their contents the subject of meditation at all convenient opportunities; we females enjoy many such, when our hands only are employed."

"I will, I will, God helping me," said Catherine, with emotion: "I will trust to that merciful and comforting encouragement, *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him?* (Luke xi. 13.) You were speaking," continued Catharine, after a pause, "to the children yesterday, and saying something in praise of the Bible?"

"Oh yes; I was telling the answer

learned and good man once made to a young person who expressed a wish to become better acquainted with the doctrines of the Christian religion. 'You cannot do better,' he said, 'than study that book which has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter.'

"Words well worth remembering," observed Catherine; "but here comes my brother from his work. How quick the time has passed! who would have thought it is near dinner time?" Catharine had hardly spoken before her brother entered the room with a countenance expressive of much good humour. He inquired kindly after the health of his wife, and placed his chair at the window to watch the proceedings of his son, who was at work in the garden.

"Where are the children, Mark?" said Ellen, "they were so anxious to supply the flower-woman with nosegays for the market and Catherine and myself have been so busily talking, that we have scarcely seen them once."

"Oh! they have made the most of their time, I promise you, at least I can answer for

one," replied her husband, laughing; "Hester will return presently; I sent her with a message to the grocer. Maurice has just made a capital business of a few bits of wall-flower. He was tying up some three-penny bunches, when a little girl and her nursery-maid looked over the palings; the maid inquired the price of strawberries, and Maurice made a bargain with the young lady. 'I should like a bunch of those beautiful flowers very much,' said she, pulling out a little silver purse; 'Sixpence, did you say?' 'Sixpence, Miss, if you please,' said Maurice, and the little lady walked off, as if she had made the best bargain in the world. To see the lad's coolness and cunning face was excellent fun; I wish you could just have seen it."

"I wish you would not encourage Maurice when he plays such tricks, by laughing at him," said Ellen, sorrowfully, "It was not a fair action, dear Mark, and you should not have let the little girl go away with the loss of her money, of which she did not know the value."

"Nonsense: what could it signify;

she paid sixpence or threepence? she was genteelly dressed and could afford it."

"I do not mean that the loss of threepence was of any consequence to her; but that Maurice gave her flowers for sixpence that he knew were only worth threepence, and therefore imposed upon the little girl, because he thought she knew no better."

"Oh, that will do; I am sorry I told you of the thing at all, and did not think you would have taken it to heart," said Mark, sullenly, while his features became as strikingly overcast, as they had been previously the reverse.

Grieved and provoked at her brother's behaviour, Catharine was on the point of taking up his wife's defence, but was deterred by an imploring look from her sister. She therefore checked her rising indignation, which was however rendered evident by the heightened colour of her cheeks, and rose in silence to prepare for the approaching meal. Ellen resumed her needle-work, and Mark whistled; but his heart was in fact heavy, and not untroubled by conscientious visitings. The entrance of the children contributed in

some measure to disperse the gloom from their father's brow. Unconscious of what had passed between their parents, they talked over their morning's occupations with all the usual vivacity of youth, and as the conversation proceeded without any allusion to the bunch of flowers, both Ellen and her husband insensibly took a part, till at length cheerfulness pervaded the whole family.

Dinner being ended, thanks were returned to the Giver of all good things; and immediately afterwards the well-known sound of the swing of the garden gate announced the approach of some visitor.

"See if it be the doctor, Maurice," said his father, "and be ready to take his horse."

Maurice ran to the window; but retreated with a countenance of astonishment, we might even say dismay: "it is Hester's Bishop, I declare."

The intelligence of so unexpected a visitor created a great sensation. Catherine, who was remarkably timid, began to clear away the remains of dinner, lamenting that there was no other room. Her sister, though sur

was less flurried, knowing that the size of the cottage corresponded with her husband's circumstances; and that the extreme neatness, and simplicity of the interior, was even more than people were led to expect from its external beauty. Hester could not help taking one peep to see if her brother was right; while Mark himself walked towards the door, smiling at his sister's confusion. "What a piece of work you are making, Catherine?" said he as he passed, "I dare say the Bishop only wants to speak to me, and will not come in at all. He wants some work done most likely."

"Are you the owner of this cottage?" demanded the Bishop, as Mark opened the door: "if so, I hope I am not unwelcome."

"Do not mention that, my lord?" replied Chalmers, with a respectful bow: "our house is small, and my wife in very poor health; I fear, therefore, it is not so comfortable as you might expect; but pray step in, I am sure you are heartily welcome."

"But shall I not disturb your sick wife, by so doing?"

"Oh no! my lord, by no means; she is

better this morning, and has been sitting-up several hours."

The Bishop then followed Mark into the cottage. "Do you recollect me, my dear," said he good-naturedly to Hester. "This is not our first meeting, is it?"

"No, my lord," replied the little girl, and the blush and smile upon her countenance showed that agreeable associations were connected with their earlier acquaintance.

The Bishop then addressed himself to her mother, inquiring kindly into the state of her health; and contriving by his manner, and a few kind words, to impart confidence to those with whom he conversed. "Your daughter pleased me extremely," he observed, "by the conscientiousness of her behaviour on the first of May. I could not but wish to be acquainted with her parents; for it is they, no doubt, who have made such valuable impressions. *Train up a child in the way he should go; and we have reason to trust in the divine promise, that when he is old, he will not depart from it.*" (Prov. xxii. 6.)

"It is my daily prayer, and with God's help, my daily endeavour, my lor

wered Ellen, whose looks seemed to confirm her words.

"There is nothing like education, to be sure," said her husband. "I would rather live upon a crust, than see a child of mine run wild for want of learning. Whether work be scarce, or times hard, we always set a trifle apart for their schooling; and my son there has not lost his time, either in writing or accounts. Bring your last exercise-book, Maurice."

"These pages certainly afford good proof of your son's application," replied the Bishop, as he looked over the copy-book presented to him by Maurice. "He is a good reader too, I dare say."

"He can read any part of the Bible, my lord: indeed they are both good readers, and I hope they will find the advantage of it some day or other; for I bring them up with the notion of working for themselves, and of having to depend wholly on their own carefulness and industry for their prosperity. We have a saying, my lord, that 'Industry is fortune's right hand, and frugality her left.'"

"Excellent maxims," returned the Bishop;

“but it were well, at the same time, to remind them that, they cannot really depend *wholly* on themselves for prosperity in life; since all we have, and all we hope for, comes from God. Industry is very right and proper; but it is only a means under God of making us independent: nor should we for a moment forget, that even the very power of *being* industrious is a divine blessing; for health, strength, and understanding, are derived from God, and he may deprive us of them according to his good pleasure. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*” (Psalm cxxvii. 1.)

“Oh yes! my lord, I hope you will believe that I instruct them in religion; I could not bear that they should be irreligious.”

The Bishop took no notice of this speech; but, turning towards Hester, drew from his pocket a neat prayer-book, which he gave to her, saying at the same time; “if you are as good a little girl as I take you to be, you will know how to value this present.”

“Thank you, my lord,” said Hester, her

looks expressing not only great delight, but a sense of the nature of the good Bishop's gift.

"You are very kind, my lord," said Ellen gratefully.

"I am sure," added her husband, "there are few besides yourself who would have rewarded so trifling an act of honesty in so handsome a manner: she did not expect it, I am sure."

"No," said the Bishop, "the action would have lost its value, had it been actuated by the hope of a recompense. I am very willing to believe that your daughter's conduct sprung from purer motives; and I gave her that book as a proof of my regard for those who act honestly in trifles; having invariably found such persons most trust-worthy in other matters. But there is a higher authority than mine on this subject which you, no doubt, remember: *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.* (Luke xvi. 10.) They are our Saviour's own words."

"I sincerely trust my daughter will lay up these words in her heart, and never give you cause to regret your present kindness.

I have reason to be thankful myself for being able to read ; and I wish my children to derive the same comfort from such a blessing."

" I am not surprised to hear you say so," replied the Bishop,—“ for from the highest to the lowest, the ability to read the word of God is one of the greatest privileges a person can enjoy.”

“ It is indeed, my lord. It has pleased God to afflict me with serious illness for several weeks, but he has never withdrawn his mercy from me ; his holy Scriptures have comforted me, and I think I may say, I have not experienced one wearisome hour. The clergyman too, and other kind friends, come to see me, and lend me many profitable books.”

“ I have a beloved daughter,” said the Bishop, “ who, like yourself, is in very weak health ; and I rejoice to say her mind is susceptible of similar comfort and enjoyment. How sad is it when people, who have been well instructed, bury their precious talent in the earth ;—and still more lamentable when they pervert it.”

“ Sad indeed !” said Ellen thoughtfully. “ My dear father was so afraid of my abusing

the privilege of reading, that he would not let me read any book that was not recommended by a person on whose judgment he could rely. He said a bad book was the worst of thieves, as it robbed us of time, money, and principles."

"An excellent remark," returned the Bishop:—"but I have paid you a long first visit. I hope I have not taken up too much of your time;—and now wish you a good morning."

Both Ellen and her husband united in thanking the Bishop for his condescension. In the mean time, little Hester had been exerting all her influence to induce her no less bashful aunt to speak for her;—but in vain. She therefore stepped forward herself, and with cheeks and brow nearly crimson with blushes, presented the Bishop with a bunch of her choicest wall-flowers; saying, in a hurried and tremulous voice, "Would your lordship please to take those flowers for the lady who is ill?"

"Thank you very much, my dear," replied the Bishop," at once relieving all poor Hester's fears, by the unaffected kindness of his

answer. "These are nice flowers indeed," added he, smelling them—"you must come some day to my house, when you have another nosegay to spare, and give it to my daughter yourself; I am sure she will like to see you." With these words the benevolent gentleman left the house; and having bestowed just praises upon the neatness of the garden, which he addressed to Maurice who ran forward to open the gate, he kindly bade him good morning, and proceeded leisurely towards his residence at Twickenham.

It is needless to dwell upon the various impressions which this scene made on the different individuals of the family. Suffice it to say, that all united in expressing pleasure not unmingled with surprise, that so trivial an adventure as that of the first of May, should produce such unexpected consequences.

The kitchen-clock now warned Mark that he had already exceeded the time commonly allotted for his return to labour; and finding it desirable that he should retrieve the character he had lost, while in Mr. Sanders' service, he returned to his work with redoubled diligence, taking Hester along with

him to collect some chips for the house. Presently afterwards, Catherine also left the room on some domestic errand; and Ellen, being thus left alone with her son, seized the opportunity of making some allusion to the occurrences of the last few hours. "Maurice," said she, in a mild and serious tone of voice, "did you remark the Bishop's sentiments respecting honesty and conscientiousness in trifling matters?"

"Yes, mother!" replied Maurice,—whose quickness rarely suffered him to lose anything he could comprehend,—"he said that persons who were honest in small matters, were worthy of trust in greater."

"And how did he prove that?"

"By the text which says, *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.*" (Luke xvi. 10.)

"Quite right, my dear; now tell me if you can repeat the remainder of that verse as it stands in Scripture?"

"Let me see," said Maurice, "I think it is, *He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.*"

"Very well: now think seriously over your

behaviour throughout this day ; and tell me, my dear Maurice, whether it has been uniformly and strictly just ? ”

Maurice raised his dark eyes in silence to his mother's face, as if to determine whether the scene in the garden was expressed there—so truly did his conscience bear witness against him.

“ What think you of the sixpenny bunch of flowers, Maurice ? ”

“ I thought you meant *that*, mother ; but surely the difference of threepence could not matter to the young lady : she did not seem to know the value of money.”

“ Consider, Maurice ;—is that the reasoning of a Christian ? Are we to take advantage of our neighbour's ignorance or inexperience, in order to make him pay more than others ; or are we justified in asking more than the just value of anything, because in our opinion, the purchaser can afford to be defrauded ? ”

“ I only wanted to make the best bargain I could ; you know father always says,

“ Get what you can, and what you get hold ;

’Tis the stone that will turn all your pence into gold.”

"You either mistake the meaning of the maxim," said his mother gravely, or you wilfully and therefore wickedly pervert it. I am almost sure that you know that the words 'get what you can' can never mean anything but what is fair and honest. How can you pray to God for your daily bread if you break the eighth commandment?"

"But, mother," replied Maurice, "the young lady gave me the money of her own accord, and very readily too; I did not steal it."

"There are various ways of breaking the eighth commandment, without absolute stealing in the common sense of the word. You may sin against the *spirit* of any of God's commandments, as well as against the *letter*. In the present case, you told a lie, you broke the eighth commandment, and transgressed against the golden precept, *Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you*. You told the young lady that the price of the bunch was sixpence, when you knew it was only threepence: and when she, being ignorant of the value of money and of the value of the flowers, gave you what you asked, you cheated, and therefore, in the

sight of God, robbed her of threepence, as much as if you had taken it by violence. You would not like any one to take the same advantage of your own inexperience. You have made me very unhappy, Maurice, by this conduct, because you offended God with your eyes open; you knew you were committing sin, and you have since been guilty of additional sin in trying to defend it, and to pervert the holy word of God. Have you reflected that the very same wicked principle which prompted you to practise this act of dishonesty, would induce you to commit any other crime on sufficient temptation? You may perhaps tell me that you are sorry for having made me unhappy, but will that remove your sin? what is *my* distress to be compared to the anger of Almighty God? You have grievously offended him, and *that* I am well assured your own conscience has told you. Seek to be reconciled to your heavenly Father, my dear boy, and then come and make your peace with your earthly parents."

Maurice was visibly affected by this address; but his proud heart was still reluctant

to confess his fault. He did not attempt to vindicate his conduct any longer, however; but contented himself with asking, "Should we never serve our own interests?"

"Christianity demands no such sacrifice," answered his mother. "On the contrary, the Bible forbids slothfulness in business, and highly recommends general industry, and carefulness in our domestic concerns. At the same we are commanded to set our *affections on things above*; that is, to make every worldly consideration subservient to our duty towards God. Do not afflict me, my dear Maurice, with the thought, that should it please God to call me soon away, and accept me for the sake of his dear Son, we should never meet in those heavenly mansions where abide the spirits of the just made perfect."

The tears which Maurice had repressed with difficulty for some time, now flowed rapidly down his cheeks. His pride and stubbornness yielded to the last appeal of his affectionate parent; for he dearly loved his mother. She was satisfied with the impression she had made, and conversed upon other

subjects with a neighbour who came to inquire about her health; so that when Hester returned immediately afterwards, no traces remained of Maurice's tears; and the little girl was so engrossed with the Bishop's gift, and so eager to arrange with her brother when they should both carry some flowers to the lady, that the subject of Maurice's unjust bargain was never afterwards reverted to.

The Bishop, whom I have had occasion to introduce to my readers, was a widower, with one daughter, a young lady who possessed the Christian virtue and affability of her justly eminent father. Miss Hawkins was delighted to see the little girl, whose modesty and integrity were so conspicuous on the first of May; nor could she fail of being pleased at first sight with the quickness and intelligence of Maurice. Many a useful present and instructive book did she bestow on the young people, as well as on their poor mother, while in return for these favours, the choicest flowers and the finest fruit the little garden afforded were gratefully selected by the children as gifts for their kind benefactress. Their father also was benefited by this

intercourse, though, it must be confessed, the employment the Bishop occasionally gave him, was rather with a view to assist his family, than from any favourable impression of his personal merits. Of this, however, Chalmers had no suspicion, nor can we say how far he might have presumed upon his benefactor's kindness, but for an occurrence which seemed in some degree to humble him. One lovely Sunday evening in the month of August, the Bishop was induced in the course of his walk to visit his friends at the cottage. He found Ellen alone, with the Bible lying open before her. After accosting her with his usual benevolence, he proceeded to inquire what had become of the other members of the family.

"The children, my lord," said she, "are taking a walk with their aunt: they went out about an hour since, as soon as they returned from the Sunday school and evening church."

"They cannot have a finer evening for their walk," observed the Bishop, "and I hope they will enjoy it, as they have not suffered it to interfere with their duty."

“I trust they will never allow recreation to trespass upon the sacredness of the day ; but as our minds, and especially the minds of children, require occasional unbending, I am glad your lordship does not disapprove of a quiet walk.”

“Undoubtedly,” replied the Bishop, “I am no friend to the austerity that would forbid it. Much to instruct and to raise our thoughts to God may be found in a walk, and children are safe while under the care of a pious friend. In riper years the temptation to abuse our leisure hours becomes greater. Young people meet together, and their conversation is too often not consistent with the sanctity of the day. Our Sabbath-evening walks should be made with our own family, or at most with some few seriously-disposed friends. In a general point of view, Christianity is the promoter of cheerfulness, and we are permitted to *use the world as not abusing it.*” (1 Cor. vii. 21.)

“Where is your husband?” at length demanded the Bishop.

“He was asked to a christening, my lord ; I do not expect him at home just at present.”

The Bishop made no observation upon her husband's absence; and sat conversing with her for nearly an hour. He then rose to depart; and as he stood upon the threshold, beheld the garden-gate thrown rudely open, and Chalmers approaching in a state of intoxication. Deeply sympathizing in Ellen's distress, whose painful feelings and mortification were sufficiently evident, he passed Chalmers in silence, who did not even seem to be aware of his presence. We shall not follow the latter into his abode, to witness the meeting between him and his wife, or to describe a scene as disgraceful as it is too frequent, but shall resume our narrative after the lapse of half an hour. Ellen had then prevailed on her husband to retire to rest.

The sun had just sunk below the horizon, marking its retreat by a long and brilliant line of light in the west, when the children returned to their mother, accompanied by their Aunt.

"Oh! mother," said Hester joyfully, "we have had such a nice walk, and we are going to search for so many things in the Bible after supper!"

"I am glad of that, my dear little girl," said her mother, smiling, "and where have you been walking?"

"We have been abroad in the meadows to see the young lambs," replied Maurice playfully, in allusion to the well-known hymn of Dr. Watts.

"Yes," resumed Hester, "and besides aunt Catherine, we have had our Sunday school teacher, Mr. Clarke, to walk with us."

"Yes," said Catherine, "I am sure your mother will like to know that Mr. Clarke joined us, because he said that neither Hester nor Maurice were likely to do any thing to make him ashamed of them."

"I am indeed glad to hear it," answered Ellen, evidently gratified.

"Ah, how I wish you were able to walk with us, mother!" said Hester: "I must tell you what we saw and talked about. In the first place, as we were crossing the pasture behind Butcher Finley's house, we saw the sheep all following each other through a broken part of the hedge, and presently afterwards Charles and his dog came to drive them

back ; so when we had helped him, Mr. Clarke asked us if this circumstance put us in mind of any part of Scripture ? and Maurice remembered that Isaiah says, *All we like sheep have gone astray.* (Isa. liii. 6.) He then inquired what we were to understand by that ; which we could not answer ; so Aunt Catherine remarked that it signified our weakness and proneness to wander from the path of righteousness."

"Well," said Maurice, interrupting her, "you know we then talked about the lambs that were playing about us. Mr. Clarke asked who was compared to a lamb ?"

"Yes," replied Hester, "and I answered that the prophet Isaiah compared Christ to a lamb that is led to the slaughter ; and that John the Baptist, when he beheld him, cried, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !*" (John i. 29.) And Mr. Clarke then told us, that he was compared to a lamb on account of his innocence, as no guile was found in his mouth, and also because a lamb was always offered as a sacrifice or sin-offering by the Jewish nation."

"Can you, Maurice, mention the most

remarkable sacrifice of this nature in the Jewish History," demanded Ellen.

"The sacrifice called the Passover: when God cut off the first-born of the Egyptians, he commanded the Israelites to slay a lamb without blemish, and to sprinkle the blood on the door-posts of their houses, in order that the destroying angel might *pass over* them."

"Right, my dear; and can you, Hester, tell me what the institution of the *Passover* was the type of?"

"It signified the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, I suppose, mother," replied Hester.

"It did, my love. It foreshowed the death of our blessed Saviour, by the shedding of whose blood a still more glorious deliverance was effected. He is therefore called the Lamb of God."

"I did not think that there was so much to be learned from a flock of sheep," observed the little girl.

Ellen smiled, and replied "God's works, my dear, are all calculated to lead us to the contemplation of himself."

"That is most true," said Catherine; "I

can now feel how much enjoyment there is in a country walk. I once thought it dull, and hear many say the same thing, but it is surely more suited to calm the feelings, and more agreeable to the sacredness of the sabbath, than a peep into the bustle of a town."

By this time the children had finished searching for the texts which had been referred to, and as it was getting late, Ellen desired them to eat their suppers and prepare to go to bed. "Will not my father return to sup with us," asked Maurice.

Poor Ellen, unwilling to expose their father's misconduct, briefly answered, "Your father will not sup with you this evening." Here the matter ended, and the thoughts of both children were speedily directed to other subjects. To Catherine, however, she afterwards gave a candid account of all that had passed ;—a painful subject for each to dwell upon, and it was not long before the two sisters separated for the night.

The following morning, Chalmers having met with some employment at the distance of a few miles, rose early and left the house

without a single feeling of compunction. It must be allowed that he felt rather disconcerted when he ascertained that the Bishop had witnessed the state in which he had returned home; but his feelings were altogether of a worldly description, and he considered with himself how far he was likely to lose his lordship's patronage. He walked slowly on, busy in this and similar reflections, and when he was about to traverse the meadows which extend in the direction of Richmond, he found himself suddenly in the presence of the very individual whom he would at this moment most gladly have avoided. The bishop was taking his early walk, and Chalmers paused as he approached, being at a loss in what manner to salute him. He observed, however, the Bishop's eye to be steadily fixed upon him, and he ventured to speak the first word, but in a somewhat lower tone than usual. "A fine morning for your Lordship's walk: I hope the young lady's health continues to amend."

"It is a fine morning, Mr. Chalmers, and I am happy to say my daughter continues better," returned the Bishop, in a grave manner, which said pretty plainly, 'your

present civility makes no difference in my opinion of your past conduct.'

Chalmers would very gladly have passed on, but it unfortunately happened that at this particular part of the path, he could not well do so without rudeness, and the Bishop stood provokingly quiet in the very middle of the path, as if he waited to see whether the individual before him had any more observations to make about the weather, his daughter, or any other subject. Chalmers began to feel very uncomfortable; he looked behind him, though he had no thoughts of running away; he then looked first to the right hand and then to the left, but there was nothing to be seen but the hedge on the one side, and the ditch on the other, and neither seemed at all inclined to change their position to oblige him. At length he looked straight before him, almost as if he had expected his unpleasant companion had by this time vanished into thin air, or was at least reduced to half his original dimensions. But there the Bishop still maintained his place, and what was worse, appeared to be in no hurry at all to relieve the poor carpenter. Thought Chalmers, 'I

must bring the matter to an explanation I see—Oh, that I should have met him just in this place !’ So screwing up his courage, which during the last half-minute had been rapidly deserting him, he rather humbly said, “Your Lordship was kind enough to visit my poor wife, yesterday ; I am sure I am very grateful to your lordship for so doing.”

“I *had* the pleasure of calling upon your wife yesterday, Mr. Chalmers,—the *pleasure* also of finding her occupied in a manner worthy of imitation.”

“I am extremely sorry for my misfortune yesterday, my lord ; I have done little else than think about it since I returned to my right senses.”

“I can scarcely conceive it possible, Mr. Chalmers ; that so flagrant a violation of the divine law should fail to produce upbraiding reflections.”

“I humbly beg your pardon, my lord.”

“It is not *my* pardon you have to seek, Mr. Chalmers, you have broken no command of mine ; but there is a Being whom you have openly insulted, and whose pardon I fear you have not yet obtained.”

Chalmers was silent.

"As a minister of God," continued the Bishop, "whose servant I am, as well as yourself, I cannot but lament and condemn so disgraceful a defiance of his law — an offence at all times, but at such a season doubly culpable."

"I hope your lordship does not set me down for a sabbath-breaker," said Chalmers.

"I trust you are not an *habitual* sabbath-breaker, Mr. Chalmers."

"If you please, my lord, I never neglect church for any thing : I went to church twice yesterday."

"Then I fear you left your devotions at the church door," replied the Bishop gravely. "Excuse me, Mr. Chalmers, if I say a few words to you on this subject ; I do not wish to hurt your feelings unnecessarily, but a man of your sense must know, that going through all the outward forms of religion, does not, of itself, constitute a religious character : you may go to church two or even three times a-day, but the question is, what are you in the sight of God ? Do you not recollect that the Gospel makes a distinction

between the *hearers* and the *doers* of the word ? Our Saviour himself says, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" (Matt. vii. 21.)

Chalmers did not half like the manner in which the good bishop addressed him, although it was spoken with all the mildness of Christian charity. His heart was still proud, and he could not bear to hear a text from Scripture quoted against him, especially when he felt the application to be perfect and complete. He had that respect for the word of God which prevented him from treating it lightly, but he fancied those who brought it against himself, did it in a spirit of superiority. Having no humility himself—in fact being a perfect stranger to it, he could not understand it in others. On the present occasion, he could not controul the flush of irritation in his sun-burnt cheeks, and replied "Perhaps your lordship does not know that I was at a christening after evening service ; I could not refuse to stand godfather to a friend's child."

“ If you consider such an occasion an allowable, or even an excusable opportunity for indulging in drunkenness, Mr. Chalmers, you are in a strange error. You yourself know that nothing can excuse a sinful action. But in this case you were at a religious ceremony, and it seems also that you undertook, by a solemn vow to God, to watch over the spiritual interests of a young fellow-creature. Your first act after taking so much upon you, was to commit an open breach of God’s holy law.”

“ I do not wish to offend,” said Chalmers, rather sullenly, “ but I am sure, some of my betters (as they are called) keep christenings with twice as much rioting and intemperance, as we poor people. There was a party at yonder house last week, where not a quarter of the company returned sober to their carriages.”

“ I grieve to hear it on all accounts,” replied the bishop. “ Those who occupy superior stations in society ought to know that their example will be held up for imitation, by the ignorant and ungodly. But *you*, Mr. Chalmers, know better : your own heart

informs you at this moment, that their misconduct will not justify yours. A time must come when we shall all have to answer for our sins ;—and what a condition should we be in, if such was our defence on the last day, and our hopes rested on no better foundation.”

Chalmers bit his lips with confusion, and stammered out that he “hoped his intentions were good.”

“I earnestly hope they are,” returned the bishop, “but as a friend let me remind you, that good intentions avail little, if your actions are wicked ; but now, Mr. Chalmers, I will detain you no longer ; I have spoken freely, and trust you will take it all in good part, and give me credit for having your spiritual interest and real happiness at heart.”

Chalmers bowed, and felt glad to be permitted to walk off. It cannot be denied that he was more humbled during the recent interview than he had ever been in his life, particularly when he discovered that the bishop, with all his benevolence, was not to be turned aside from his purpose by smooth speeches. The good effects arising from this conversation, were, however, soon eradicated ; for

early in the ensuing week his lordship left Twickenham to spend some months in his diocese, and during a part of that period Miss Hawkins was also absent. Not having any immediate check, therefore on his conduct, he did not care to recollect the bishop's advice further than was convenient. At the same time, it is but justice to add that his feelings towards his wife were greatly softened by her increasing illness, which, towards the approach of autumn, daily assumed a more serious aspect. It pleased the Almighty to spare her till the commencement of October when she died in the steadfast faith and hope of a Christian. Such characters require no epitaph; they live in the hearts of surviving friends. Of Ellen Chalmers it might truly be said that religion was the moving spring of her actions. She loved her Maker and her neighbour, and the fruits of that love were, charity, humility, honesty, kindness, diligence, and frugality.

PART SECOND.

WHOSO IS PARTNER WITH A THIEF HATETH HIS
OWN SOUL.—Prov. xxii. 29.

IT would be needless to follow the afflicted family of Ellen Chalmers through the painful scenes which immediately succeeded her decease. We shall therefore resume our narrative after an interval of two months;—a period when the reader may imagine the winter season to have set in with premature and unusual severity. About this time the bishop and his daughter returned to Twickenham, where the intelligence of their arrival gave rise to joyful feelings in the hearts of all who knew them. Many a silent blessing accompanied the hearty welcome which issued from the lips of high and low, and was gratefully appreciated by these amiable individuals. In the course of their

inquiries, Ellen Chalmers was not forgotten, and the affliction of her bereaved family drew from them the kindest expressions of concern and sympathy. A single day only elapsed before the bishop bent his steps towards the house of mourning. As he entered the cottage-garden he could not forbear pausing for a few seconds to reflect upon the various changes which had taken place since his first knowledge of the family. He had visited them at a season when nature had just put on her richest garment, and every external object seemed calculated to excite hope and gladness. He now beheld her, stripped as it were of all her ornaments, or, at most, enlivened by a few of those never-fading plants, which, like reminiscences of happier days, render the contrast, whether moral or physical, more melancholy. The bay, the ivy, and the holly-tree were beautiful; but they displayed their dark green foliage amidst sharp frost and flaky snow, and seemed as if they hardly belonged to the scene around them. "How truly," (thought the good man) "do these trees, unchanged by the storms and varying temperature of the

seasons, resemble that principle of everlasting hope which raises the true Christian above the desponding influence of adversity ! Such was the feeling which rendered the mind of Ellen Chalmers so uniformly meek and tranquil ; but how should it be otherwise ? *The leaf of the righteous shall not wither*, (Psalm i. 3.) As for the hypocrite, his *hope shall perish in its greenness*, (Job viii. 12.) Another instant put a stop to these reflections, for as the bishop passed through the garden, he caught a glimpse of some one in the cottage. Receiving no answer to his summons, he gently opened the door and perceived Chalmers sitting close beside the expiring embers of a fire which he seemed to endeavour in vain to re-kindle.

“ So you have thought proper to return and watch the fire, have you ? ” exclaimed the latter in an angry tone, and without raising his eyes from his occupation. Then giving vent to a profane imprecation, he was about to proceed in an abusive manner, when the bishop interrupted him by pronouncing his name. The angry man looked up in astonishment, started from his chair,

and let fall the bellows in his confusion and surprise.

"I beg you ten thousand pardons, my lord, I am sure I was not aware who it was that stood before me." Here the recollection of his deceased wife evidently came across his mind, for the expression of his countenance saddened, and his manner became less flurried as he observed, "Times and circumstances are widely altered since your lordship crossed this threshold; you have been informed, probably, of my loss."

The bishop replied in the affirmative; and having dwelt upon the subject for a short time, in a manner he thought likely to shew at once his own sympathy and the benefit to be derived from afflictive dispensations, proceeded to inquire in a friendly manner after the two children.

"I thank you, my lord, they are both pretty well; that is to say, very well in health," replied Chalmers, "and Maurice is grown and improved in his learning surprisingly. But," continued he, colouring at the recollection of his recent vehemence "there is no one to look after the house if

any way at present, and every thing has gone wrong since Catharine left us."

"I am sorry to hear that," returned the bishop, "Is your sister gone to service?"

"No, my lord; but she is as much lost to me, as if she were; she married a serjeant in the 28th regiment, about three weeks since;—a young man of very good prospects, to whom she had been engaged some months, and they are shortly to embark for India."

"Oh! I remember your excellent wife telling me last summer, that Catharine's affections were very suitably engaged. You will miss her company, no doubt; at the same time it must be a source of heartfelt satisfaction to you, to know that she has married a man of so good a character. I heard that he had been distinguished for good principles, dutiful conduct towards his family, and uniformly moral habits. Under such circumstances, and with a reasonable prospect of an honest livelihood, marriage is both honourable and desirable."

"You say right, my lord, and it is but doing justice to Catharine, to acknowledge that she has done her duty towards us: in-

deed she was to have been married in August, but she would not leave my wife, when she saw that her illness increased ; and Harry Laurence (her husband that was to be) said he would willingly wait, for he loved her all the better for her sisterly and affectionate behaviour."

"There spoke the Christian," replied the bishop, "one who would really do to others as he would himself be done by. How long, then, has Catherine left you ?"

"Between three weeks and a month, my lord, for she remained with us more than a month after Ellen breathed her last, to try to settle things, and put my daughter in the way of taking her place, in some measure. But that was impossible, as I told her at the time, so she might as well have spared herself the pains, though she meant kindly, poor thing."

"You appear to speak slightly of your daughter's services: it would be unreasonable to expect that one so young as Hester should possess the discretion, or the companionable qualities of those friends from whom it has pleased providence to separate you. But

independently of the fatherly interest which you must take in your child, your daughter is surely of an age to go through the greater part of the domestic offices you require. I have seen many cases, where common household duties have been diligently fulfilled by girls even younger than Hester."

"I do not doubt that, my lord, but wit does not always keep pace with years. There is scarcely an hour's difference between the ages of Hester and her brother, yet I would challenge Maurice at any time, to act with twice as much judgment; and as for going through the commonest household duties, your lordship may see her capability by the appearance of the room. I am really ashamed of its disorder." The dirty and confused state of the apartment had not escaped the eye of the bishop on his first entry, though he had hitherto suffered it to pass without comment. In truth the contrast which it afforded to the neat and orderly arrangement of every thing in Ellen's life-time, was very striking. The furniture, from the clothes-press to the very chairs, was undusted; slops, grease, and potatoe-parings were scattered

over the floor, and part of the once neat and clean little window-curtain hung in shreds, exhibiting a token, if not of carelessness, at least of habitual neglect.

"To speak honestly," replied the bishop, "I must needs confess, that the present appearance of your house bespeaks a lamentable want of order, cleanliness and attention. But I trust we need not despair of seeing things more comfortable,—your daughter will grow wiser and more active as she grows older."

"If people would listen to instruction, it is likely enough they might grow wiser," said Chalmers, half speaking to himself, "There are some children, my lord, in whom the weeds will grow, in spite of all one can do."

"To be sure," returned the bishop, "human exertions do not invariably succeed. But beware of attributing to other causes, what may spring from your own neglect. You will do little without divine assistance; all that Paul and Apollos could do, was to plant and water, and they did plant and water, trusting to God for the increase.

Thus should we act towards our children, however unpromising they may seem to be. In some shape or other we shall receive our reward. Hester has the full possession of her faculties, has she not ? ”

“ Oh yes, my lord ; I did not mean to insinuate anything of that kind. The evil is that she is so slow to learn, and so very faint-hearted, that if anything go wrong, or she be spoken to at all sharply, she cries and pets, and gives herself quite up as it were. What with her poor mother's death and Catharine's departure, I am sure she has been fit for nothing lately. And time does not seem to mend her ; she gets through no work of any kind, and seems to take no interest in what concerns the house or family. I left her to-day, with orders to get dinner ready by one o'clock ; I came in half an hour before that time, and found no one in the house and the fire nearly out. I have to walk as far as Fulham this afternoon, and I am thrown an hour behind hand.”

“ And where is Hester all this time ? ” asked the bishop, who now perceived that her father had some cause for displeasure.

"Oh, I can give a tolerably good guess where she may be found," answered Chalmers; "for she scarcely leaves the house on any errand of her own, except to visit the church-yard where her poor mother lies buried. She will stand beside the grave and weep, till I have been forced, many a time, to bring her away myself: Maurice went for her a short time ago."

"But this must not be suffered," exclaimed the bishop. "Your daughter will, I hope, be convinced, that an excess of sorrow is not right, and that grief for lost friends ought not to interrupt the discharge of duty to the living." Chalmers shook his head; and the bishop pressed the matter no further, suspecting that were Chalmers actually to employ any arguments to regulate his daughter's feelings, his worldly-mindedness would lead him to suggest none calculated to alleviate them. Under such an impression the kind-hearted gentleman bade him farewell. At the garden gate, he met Hester Chalmers herself, her eyes still moist with tears, and her hand fast locked in that of her brother. Maurice took off his hat, respect-

fully, and Hester, recognising the bishop, started as one aroused from a dream ; she curtsied silently, however, and hurried past, as if anxious that her distress should pass unnoticed. The good bishop thought it best not to follow her, and having addressed a few good-natured words to Maurice, turned towards his own home.

The feelings under which Hester laboured, were not likely to be improved by the treatment she received in the present instance from her father. Regardless of the sentiments he had so recently listened to, he gave way to his accustomed violence of temper, which in the place of removing, only served to increase the timidity and dejection of his child. She was terrified, but not instructed ; overwhelmed with the consequences of her faults, but neither encouraged to attempt, nor directed how to amend them. When she arose the following morning, her spirits seemed more than ever depressed : her looks were agitated, her actions hurried, while every harsh word her father uttered, brought fresh tears into her eyes ; and no sooner had he departed to his work and her brother to

school, than covering her face with her hands she sobbed aloud.

The worthy Bishop, ever intent on a life of beneficence, and alive to the moral as well as the physical welfare of those around him, had this morning set off immediately after breakfast to visit the cottage; and Hester had continued very long in the posture we have described, ere his knock was heard at the door. A hurried glance from the window enabled Hester to see who her visitor was, and her pale cheek became flushed as she said to herself, "it is the Bishop." In the meantime the Bishop knocked a second time. The little girl's feelings may be readily imagined. Gladly during her mother's lifetime would she have been the first to have welcomed him: but her heart was then light, it was now very sorrowful, and her eyes were swollen and red with weeping. Still agitated and fearful, from her father's recent death, she had a vague apprehension that she might incur that of the Bishop. Trembling from head to foot, she therefore rushed without a moment's farther reflection, to the adjoining room; but with the success which

usually attends thoughtless and precipitate doings. A potato-paring, which happened to lie where it ought not to have been, caused her foot to slip: this accident brought her into contact with a bucket of pig's-meat, which bucket was likewise out of its proper place; the result was perfectly natural; over went the bucket, and away floated the contents in a copious stream across the floor.

"Oh! the nasty bucket, what shall I do?" exclaimed the terrified Hester; forgetting that her own carelessness was the sole cause of the disaster, and that the bucket was quite innocent. At this inauspicious moment the Bishop entered. Too much agitated to speak, to run away, or even to look him in the face, Hester fixed her eyes upon the floor, and stood like a statue. Her good-natured friend perceiving the more immediate cause of her confusion, retreated a few paces, saying, "I did not mean to interrupt you, my dear; I will walk round the garden for a little while." He then withdrew, leaving Hester much comforted by his kind manner. Within the space of a quarter of an hour, the interior of the cottage exhibited a more inviting aspect;

the little girl had laboured most indefatigably; yet there remained many indications of previous neglect, too obvious to escape notice. The practised eye of the Bishop, accustomed to the dwellings of the poor, detected other things, not at first sight so apparent, but from which he drew equally important conclusions. Among these was a Bible, covered with more dust, than could be the accumulation of a few days.

"Hester," said he, after talking with her for some time in a manner calculated to inspire confidence, "is not that *your* Bible I see laying on the shelf?"

"Yes, my Lord," returned Hester, hanging down her head, for her conscience whispered that of late she had neglected to make a right use of it.

"Have you made it your especial study, your guide, and your comfort, under your recent affliction? I fear not." The good man pronounced these words in so serious, yet so mild a tone of expostulation, that poor Hester felt quite overcome, and burst into an unrestrained agony of tears. The Bishop's compassionate feelings were much excited by

her grief: he took her kindly by the hand, and said; "My dear little girl, I speak to you as a friend, consider me as such, and let me see whether I cannot in some way give you comfort."

"Oh, my lord, you must think me very wicked for grieving as I do, but I cannot help it: I have never enjoyed a happy moment since my dear mother died, and I feel as if I should never know one again."

"Hester," replied the Bishop, "I can readily sympathise with your feelings;—God forbid that I should not; it has pleased him to visit me with many afflictions similar to yours; that is, I have been called upon to submit to the pangs of separation from the friends I loved most: and, Hester, I found that nothing in *this* world afforded me comfort and support under those trials."

Hester's heart was too full to allow of her speaking; but her countenance expressed her gratitude for the sympathy she received.

"Your present affliction, my dear," continued the Bishop, "is one of the heaviest that human nature has to suffer. The loss of your parent places you in some measure

beyond the reach of human consolation. But this very circumstance should serve to guide you to that all-sufficient refuge, who has said, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*" (Matt. xi. 28.) *Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*" (Psalm l. 15.)

"Oh, my lord, you talk so much like my mother, it does me good to listen to you; no one ever heard a murmur escape her lips."

"And ought not this circumstance, my dear Hester, to give you comfort? should not the recollection of her Christian resignation incline you to seek that grace whereby she was strengthened?"

"Indeed, my lord, it is my heart's desire to live and die like her; yet there is scarcely an hour in the day when I do not feel ready to cry out, O that it had pleased God to spare her some time longer."

"It is most natural, especially at your age, that you should wish your mother's life to have been prolonged. But if it is indeed your wish to die the death of the righteous, you should now evince your resignation to

the will of your Almighty Father, by endeavouring to imitate her virtues, and by praying for grace and strength to carry you through your difficulties with cheerfulness."

"Oh! my lord, I have need to pray for God's forgiveness. I used to read the Holy Scriptures to my dear mother, who delighted in hearing me; and I did the same to Aunt Catherine as long as she remained; but afterwards I felt too unhappy to open a book; and," added she, hesitatingly, "I have done very wickedly, for I have never read my Bible since."

"Alas! my dear, you have indeed, then, sinned in the sight of Heaven, and rejected those consolations which God in his infinite mercy afforded you. You would have found, and may still find, in that book, the best medicine for a wounded spirit. You will find there, that we are forbidden to sorrow for the death of those we love, as though we had no hope. You know that David was afflicted by God; but he acknowledged the hand of the Almighty: *I was dumb*, said he, *I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* (Psalm xxxix. 9.) Then, again, you know

that Eli said, under a still more awful visitation, *It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good.* (1 Sam. iii. 18.) Job, too, when under the pressure of extraordinary calamities, exclaimed, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.*" (Job i. 21.)

Hester's heart seemed once more ready to overflow, but she struggled hard to repress her tears. She fully acknowledged her sinfulness, and expressed the deepest contrition. We shall not continue the conversation, but content ourselves with mentioning that Hester received a lesson which, through God's blessing, she did not forget. Its effects, though gradual, were sufficiently evident in her conduct. She prayed regularly and fervently that God would enable her by his grace to discharge her duties with faithfulness and diligence; and she proved the sincerity of her petitions, by endeavouring to act accordingly; and while she never ceased to cherish the memory of her beloved parent, she sought to acquire that principle of resignation which is the triumph of religion in the soul.

Several months now glided past, unmarked

by any particular incident. Domestic matters went forward more comfortably. Hester's earnest efforts to please her father, insensibly won his approbation, and softened many of his asperities: instead of continual upbraidings, he frequently praised her for the pains she took; too often, nevertheless, coupled with an allusion to her brother's superior understanding. Maurice he was proud of, and used to say, "that lad is sure to make his way in the world." In his opinion, mere sense or acuteness was the foundation-stone of prosperity. Whether he was confirmed or disappointed in his views, the sequel of the present narrative will disclose.

When Maurice had entered his fourteenth year, his father became very anxious to procure him a situation; and after several unsuccessful applications, at length had the hope of his being engaged by a lady at Richmond. He was supported by the Bishop's recommendation, the good man having employed the boy for some time himself, and being quite satisfied with his conduct. Maurice was vastly elated at his opening prospects, and eagerly anticipated the day

when the business was to be decided. The morning at length arrived when he was to appear before the lady, and brought with it (it must be confessed) some feelings of apprehension, shared in different degrees by all the members of the family. Even Chalmers, satisfied as he was with his son's appearance, had his own anxiety when he saw him preparing to accompany the Bishop's confidential servant; uncertain as yet of the lady's approbation. He even made Mason the butler wait, whilst he repeated his instructions, charging him very particularly, as he concluded his directions, to make his best bow, to keep his hands quiet, and to look the lady in the face when he spoke to her. The lad being at last fairly dismissed, Chalmers returned to his work-shop, turning round now and then to see if his son were out of sight; and muttering something to himself about the lady's folly and blindness, should she not hire Maurice at once.

In less than a couple of hours Maurice returned, with success written in his face. The lady had promised to engage him, provided her inquiries were satisfactorily

answered by the Bishop, and of this neither the father nor the son could doubt. The latter proceeded with the eagerness and animation of youth, to detail and expatiate upon the events of the day,—all that his future mistress had said,—the affability of her looks and manner,—the nice house she lived in, and the respectable appearance of the servants. Mark could hardly help laughing at his son's admiration, and told him at last he could not afford to let him talk all day. "I had a visit," continued he, "from my old customer, Mr. Stephenson of Windsor, while you were away, and he has left some employment for us both."

"Mr. Stephenson," said Maurice, "is not he the gentleman who bespoke all our Malay fowls' eggs so long since?"

"The very same: he rode over this morning to remind me of them, and finding that I had saved a good number, directed me to send them off this day by the Windsor coach; so we have no time to lose."

Maurice needed not a second injunction; he was all on the alert, and, with the assistance of his father and sister, the eggs were

speedily packed. "Shall I carry them down to the coach-office?" said Maurice.

"No, I must do that myself," replied his father, "and lifting up the hamper, was about to leave the house, when his foot became entangled in some twine that Hester was winding off for a fruit-net, and down came hamper, eggs, and Chalmers himself on the floor. Both children ran to the assistance of their father, who having got up, rubbed himself, and kicked away the twine with no small degree of impatience, began to think of the probable fate of his eggs. The cover was removed, and as might be anticipated, they presented a very deplorable aspect.

"They are not all broke, however," exclaimed Hester, "I see as many as five whole ones,—let us take them out."

"No, no," said her father, let me manage it. I won't have an egg taken out. I think I can mend the matter with less trouble."

"What? mend broken eggs!" said Maurice and Hester at once, in surprise.

"No, I would hardly promise to do that; but broke or unbroke, I shall send the eggs, and Mr. Stephenson may fancy

they have had a tumble off the coach, if he pleases."

Maurice laughed heartily at the idea, while Hester looked up, as if she doubted whether her parent were in earnest. "But, father," exclaimed she, as she observed him really proceeding to replace the hay, "you surely will not send these broken eggs to Windsor? What use can Mr. Stephenson possibly make of them?"

"That is his affair, not mine," replied Chalmers; "I never warranted the eggs to hatch, you know, you simpleton."

"No," said Hester blushing, "but I thought he meant ——."

"What does it matter what you thought, or what he meant," interrupted Chalmers sharply—"I tell you once for all, I care not a farthing whether the eggs be good or bad, broken or unbroken, provided I am paid for them."

"But, father," said Hester timidly—

"Well, speak out—what is it?"

"Only that Mr. Stephenson has already paid you for good and whole eggs."

"Well and suppose he has; people must

always run some risk, and he will scarcely be ruined for the value of a score of eggs; and after all, they were broken by an accident after they had been packed up and addressed to him; so that they were, in fact, on their road to him."

"But father," returned the conscientious Hester, "would it not be using the gentleman unjustly, if we did not really give him the value of what he paid for?"

"Do you pretend to say that I do not know the just and proper regulations in trade as well as yourself?" replied her father, angrily. "Where have you learnt these sort of notions?"

"I was thinking, father, of my last reading lesson."

"I believe the girl is half-witted," muttered Chalmers—"What is it you are driving at?" said he, sharply.

"When you heard me read yesterday, father," answered Hester meekly, "you know we came to a part of the Bible which says, *a perfect and a just measure shalt thou have.* (Deut. xxv. 15.)

Chalmers stood convicted; but he was too

proud to own it. Colouring with vexation, he desired his daughter to talk, for the future, about things that she could understand; and, checking all further observations, he replaced the hay as fast as he could, and carried the hamper to the coach-office.

Here let us leave Chalmers, and follow Maurice, who found employment in carrying messages, and doing other little services for the Bishop's butler, during the remainder of the day.

Hester was occupied with her needle until the evening, when she went, by her father's desire, to purchase some necessaries from the grocer at Twickenham. While the shopman was folding up the articles, she amused herself by watching the proceedings of a concourse of people assembled in front of a gaudy-coloured vehicle, drawn by a single pie-bald horse, whose flowing tail and mane were decorated with ribbons. The sounds of a tambourine, pipe and tabor, excited still more Hester's curiosity. "That is a caravan of wild beasts," said the shopman, replying to her looks, rather than to any question she had put.

"Wild beasts!" exclaimed Hester. "Is that beautiful horse drawing a show of wild beasts? how I wish I could see them!"

"Well, take your parcel," said the man, smiling at her eagerness, "and run off; there is your brother, standing by the caravan, he will tell you more about it than I can."

Hester flew towards her brother. "Maurice, Maurice!" she exclaimed, "is this really a wild-beast show?"

"To be sure it is," said Maurice, "do you not see the lion painted outside?"

"Oh, yes! then they have a real lion to shew, I suppose. I wonder what all those people pay for seeing him."

"I can soon find that out," said her brother; "but you must hold this in the mean time;" and he put into her hands a pot of porter; "take care of it," added he, "for I am carrying it to the Bishop's butler."

Hester received it with due caution. At this moment she observed a hand-bill, describing the contents of the caravan, and found that the entrance money was sixpence, —children, half-price. "Oh! that I had sixpence of my own," thought Hester, "it

would just admit Maurice and myself." The kind-hearted little girl, however, knew that wishing for a sixpence would not bring her nearer to the wild beasts, and was too sensible to waste her time upon wishes; she therefore turned away from the sense of attraction, saying to Maurice, "Come, brother, there is nothing to keep us here."

"Why are you in such a hurry?" asked Maurice. "Because," replied the little girl, "we have neither of us threepence of our own."

"Stay," said a man belonging to the show, "you are a modest pretty little girl, and I should be sorry to disappoint you for the sake of threepence; I will let you pass in free for a drink of your porter."

"The porter does not belong to me, thank you, sir," said Hester.

"Whose is it then?" asked the showman; "but never fear, my girl, you may find a hundred excuses."

"It is not mine to give, sir, said Hester the second time, turning away abruptly, as if she feared to be forcibly deprived of her charge.

"Well, it's your own affair," returned the

man with a contemptuous laugh; "I wont make you so good an offer twice." Some of the by-standers joined in the laugh; and Hester shrinking from the ridicule which her conscientious principles had obtained for her, took her brother's hand, and hurried out of the crowd.

"What was it the man said to you?" inquired Maurice, when they had fairly made their way out of the crowd: "did he offer to shew you the wild beasts for nothing?"

"Not he indeed; he wanted me to let him drink the porter, though I told him it was not my own. I am sure he was not an honest man; for he laughed so impudently when I refused to give it him."

Maurice made no reply, and walked on in silence, which was so unusual with him, that at last Hester said, "Maurice, what are you thinking of?"

"Thinking of," replied Maurice, almost starting,— "thinking of; I was just thinking you had best take the nearest road home, lest you should be wanted; there is no use in your following me to the Bishop's,—so you may give me the porter again."

The little girl did as she was desired, bad him farewell; and, with a light heart and brisk step, proceeded homeward. Not so Maurice, whose whole mind was absorbed in the wild beast show, and the offer which had been made by the show-man to his sister. He watched till she was fairly out of sight. Guilty thoughts had made him such a coward, that he was afraid even of a little girl,—his own sister; because he knew her to be better than himself. He looked back on the caravan, and wondered whether the man would make *him* a similar offer. “He who parleys with vice is sure to be overcome;” and so it proved in the present case. Maurice soon determined to make the attempt; and again mingled with the busy throng. Pressing onward, he soon reached the caravan, and walking up to the man, offered him the porter for a sight of the animals. The man laughed; and proceeded to swallow sixpence-worth in place of threepence-worth of the liquor. The heart of Maurice, in the meantime, beat violently; for he was fearfully conscious at that moment of his wickedness, and perhaps would have submitted to any

sacrifice to have had the porter again in his possession. It was however too late; and when the man desired him to pass on, the elation which at first he felt, soon gave way to vague and uncomfortable forebodings respecting the consequences of his misconduct. Even in laughter his heart was sorrowful; nor could the grandeur of the Lion, nor the drolleries of the Monkey, render it otherwise. He became more and more miserable; every new voice caused him to look round with nervous anxiety, and when after experiencing many false alarms, and seeing many strange faces, he at length recognized butcher Finley at some distance,—darted from the caravan, and upset in his haste the contents of an old woman's stall. This only made him run the faster, in order to escape observation; never reflecting that the faster he ran, the more likely he was to attract it. Still less did he reflect,—unhappy boy,—that there was one eye which he could never elude,—an eye which is *in every place beholding the evil and the good.* (Prov. xv. 3.)

Having at last got out of reach of Mr. Finley's observation and the old woman's

cries, Maurice began to think of some excuse which should account for the loss of the porter, as well as for his unreasonable waste of time; so true it is that one crime leads to the commission of another. Maurice, however, flattered himself that he should be able to keep up his character by telling a lie. He ran back to the tavern, and procured a second supply of porter; and when sharply reprimanded by the butler for his long absence, replied that he had been pushed down in the street by a man in liquor, that the porter had been spilled, and that he had been kept waiting at the tavern half an hour, when he returned to get some more. He had hitherto shewn himself so punctual in the discharge of his commissions, that he was believed, and Mason immediately gave him some further employment. During the remainder of the evening he laboured more diligently than usual, and his activity attracted the attention of his fellow-servants, one of whom remarked, that one could hardly work harder to save one's character. Maurice felt the force of the words, and though pretending to laugh at what was said, was much

relieved when the entrance of the House-keeper put a stop to any additional comments on his diligence. Mrs. Sweetmeat, the personage just alluded to, was at that moment too intensely engrossed by her own peculiar concerns to think of other matters. She bustled about with her keys, and by many significant glances from the tea-things to the clock, evinced her impatience at the non-arrival of her master's muffins, which had been bespoken by herself. "Maurice," said she, "cannot you put down those knives, and run down to the shop on the left hand side of yonder street, and ask;—stay, here comes the old muffin-woman herself." In walked the next moment a tidy respectable looking old woman, along with a child carrying a basket. Maurice raised his eyes as she entered, and at the first glance recognized the old woman whose stall he had that very evening overthrown. As she set down her basket, and looked him full in the face, he felt that at least one of his misdoings was about to be exposed.

"So! you are the lad that spoiled me a score of cakes, and then ran off without pay-

ing me for them. You shall pay me now though, I promise you."

"I won't, I didn't,—I don't know what you mean," said Maurice; his very manner betraying his guilt.

But the old woman, however, was not to be repulsed. "You do know what I mean, you young hypocrite," said she; "there are others too who know the truth of what I say, so you need not pretend to deny it."

"Why what is all this about?" exclaimed the Housekeeper; "what noise is this in my kitchen?"

"I beg your pardon, Madam," replied the old woman, with a respectful curtsy: "far be it from me to make a disturbance in anybody's kitchen; I always wish to be civil to every one; but if you please, I am a poor old woman with no means of living but by my calling; and this lad wants to cheat me out of the value of a score of cakes and tarts, which he spoiled this evening by upsetting one of the boards of my stall."

"I never meddled with you or your stall," said Maurice, trembling. "You are taking

me for somebody else, for I was busy elsewhere."

"You know, as well as I do, that you are telling a wilful falsehood," said the old woman: "what do you say, Martha," continued she, addressing the little girl, her grand-daughter, "is not this the same lad?"

"Yes, grand-mother, I am sure it is he who upset our board, as he ran down from the caravan."

"Hold your tongue," cried Maurice, passionately "you are a saucy little liar, and I do not believe you ever saw my face before."

"I have though, indeed," replied the child; "I have stood near you three times this afternoon; once in the caravan, then when you gave the showman some porter to drink, and also when you threw over grand-mother's board, and ran away as fast as you could."

At the word *porter*, all eyes were turned upon Maurice. Mason looked at him steadfastly, and as the muffin-woman and her child gave a more particular account of what they had witnessed, the culprit became pale, and saw at once that he was convicted upon

the clearest evidence. Mason immediately addressed him in a very serious manner, and pointed out in feeling but plain terms, the many instances in which he had that day transgressed the commands of God. But Mason was not content with doing his duty by halves. He took him to his father, to whom he faithfully detailed the whole business. Chalmers expressed himself highly indignant at his son's conduct; but his feelings were evidently excited by worldly considerations, and with all the inconsistency of a purely worldly character, it never once occurred to him, that his own sentiments and example had been the means of his son's fall. He endeavoured to extort a promise from Mason, that the affair should be kept secret from the Bishop; but in this he completely failed. Mason was an honest and conscientious man, and however reluctant to expose the boy's misconduct to his master, he knew it was his plain duty to do so; and having told Chalmers his sentiments on this point, he left the cottage, expressing a sincere hope, that Maurice would profit by the warning he had that day received.

Mason's eyes were that evening to be farther opened in regard to the habits and education of young Maurice. As he walked homeward, he was addressed by a respectable-looking individual whose face he thought he was acquainted with. "You have made an unpleasant discovery concerning this lad, sir," observed the person; "I was settling some accounts with his father when you entered."

"I am sorry to say such is really the case," answered Mason; and the more so, as I had hoped for better things from him: I believed him honest as well as intelligent."

The stranger shook his head. "Twelve months ago," said he, "I thought so too. I knew little of the poor boy's family then, but I kept a haberdasher's shop at Twickenham, and Maurice frequently carried parcels from my house to one of his father's customers. In this way I had many opportunities of seeing him and talking with him, so that being much taken with his shrewdness and obliging manner, I had decided in my own mind to make the offer of taking him as an apprentice on the first vacancy. Meanwhile

a circumstance happened, which induced me to think unfavourably of his disposition, and when he least expected observation. You know Mr. Standen's house, I dare say, which stands about half a mile from the town, with a pretty garden attached to it, fenced round with white rails and a yew hedge. I called there one evening on business, and while the old gentleman and I were talking, this young lad, Maurice, interrupted us, and, in a very modest respectful manner, asked Mr. Standen to bestow a few flowers for the children's May garlands. Mr. Standen good-humouredly consented, and picked some flowers for him here and there, where he thought they could best be spared. I walked away; but happening to turn round, detected the boy in a very dishonourable action; he was following Mr. Standen as he was bid to do, it is true, but he was gathering every flower behind the old gentleman's back, which he thought he could lay hands on without discovery, and hiding them in his hat and pockets. My feelings of indignation were roused; and, as my road lay through his father's workshop, I looked in, and told him

of his son's conduct, with as much delicacy as possible. I am sorry to say he listened coolly enough, and even laughed at what he chose to call his son's sharpness, and at my particular notions. When I found that he took my friendly communication in this manner, I spoke more plainly, and told him he ought to know, that in the sight of God it was not the value of the article stolen that constituted the theft—and that if his son were led to regard such offences as venial, his future fate might be a melancholy one."

"True enough," replied Mason, thoughtfully; "I fear that unless something be done, poor Maurice is on the road to ruin."

The companions soon after separated. True to his declaration, Mason, on the following morning, made the Bishop acquainted with all that had passed. Maurice was summoned before the presence of the latter, who addressed him at length with much kindness. The conscience-struck boy wept bitterly, and on his knees entreated the Bishop to forgive him.

"It is my duty to forgive you, and I do forgive you, Maurice," said the Bishop; "but at

the same time I must tell you, that you have forfeited all claims to my confidence. While I believed you to be honest, I recommended you as such to a friend, in whose service you would have received kindness and encouragement. Your late conduct compels me to withdraw that recommendation. But what is *my* displeasure, Maurice, in comparison with that of an offended God? What said the Prophet Elisha to his lying servant? *Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot?* (2 Kings v. 26.) Do you not believe, that in like manner the eye of God was fixed upon you, when *you* went about to deceive myself and others?"

Maurice returned home considerably affected, and with a heavy heart told his father what had occurred. Chalmers for once felt that his son's deceit had been productive of evil consequences. He was vexed and disappointed that he should have lost so good a situation, and he punished him rather for having injured his worldly prospects, than for having rebelled against the commandments of his Maker. Chalmers, however, still entertained some faint hopes that the

Bishop might be prevailed on to overlook the past ; he therefore called at his lordship's house, along with his son ; but as might be expected, without obtaining his end. The Bishop told him, that as far as he himself was concerned, he had already assured Maurice of his entire forgiveness ; but that nothing could induce him to recommend Maurice as an honest lad until he really believed him to be one ; for to give a false character, he remarked, was of itself an act of dishonesty. Chalmers was silenced by this declaration. He knew by experience that the Bishop was insensible to flattery, and deemed it prudent to receive his advice with civility, without any further attempt to influence his determination. A few months passed away. The Bishop and his daughter took their final leave of Twickenham, and soon afterwards Maurice was hired by a gentleman residing near Windsor. This gentleman was no other than Mr. Stevenson, to whom Chalmers had sent the hamper of broken eggs. Being in want of a lad to wait upon him and assist in the stable, and pleased with Maurice's countenance and manner, he en-

gaged him without any particular inquiry. At the same time it is only fair to state, that having employed the father for some years, he thought he had reason to place confidence in his testimony. Chalmers was delighted at this event, and told everybody of his son's good luck in getting a place worth two suits of clothes and eight pounds a-year, to begin with. At Maurice's departure he was very particular in his instructions; but they might all be summed up in three maxims,—to work hard, to save money, and to win his master's favour. Not one word did this thoughtless parent say of matters beyond the present world; nor did it even occur to him, that moral and religious conduct was eminently conducive to his dearest earthly wishes. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* (Matt. vi. 33.)

Hester was very sorry to part from her brother, but endeavoured to get the better of all selfish feelings. She had many kind neighbours, and from one of the name of Adams, in particular, she received much comfort and assistance. Susan Adams was

the highly respectable wife of a small market gardener, who lived about a mile distant. Both her husband and herself were esteemed by all who knew them, for the fairness of their dealings and their kind and charitable disposition. During the last illness of Ellen Chalmers, Susan frequently sat up with her at night, without looking forward to any remuneration, while her husband was equally neighbourly in many little matters: such as bringing medicines when Chalmers was occupied at a distance, sending fruit from his own garden, and giving up the use of his pony when Ellen was too weak to take other exercise.

For some months prior to the period to which we have brought down our tale, Chalmers had often complained of ill health, and indeed it was sometimes sufficiently evident that disease was lurking in his constitution. The doctor told him to spare his strength as much as possible, and with this view he thought he would buy an ass or a pony to relieve him from the fatigue of walking to a distance to work. Now it happened that Adams had a useful pony which he

wished to dispose of; and Chalmers thought it would suit his purpose exactly, so he offered seven pounds for it. Adams, however, demanded ten pounds, saying, that he knew it would bring that sum or thereabouts at the fair. As they could not agree, here the business ended; and sometime afterwards Adams took his pony to the fair, whither Chalmers accompanied him, intending, as he said, to purchase another at his own price. But this unprincipled man was in reality intent upon defrauding his honest neighbour, and bringing to light another link in the chain of vice with which he was bound. He soon perceived that it was in vain to urge Adams to let him have the pony for the money he had offered, and as he was determined to give no more, and yet if possible to possess the pony, he thought of one scheme after another to effect his purpose. At last he took him into a public house, and having insensibly plied him with liquor, obtained the pony without farther difficulty, for seven pounds. The money was paid, and Chalmers, rejoicing in his iniquitous success, took leave of his companion. But little did he, after

having thus *put a stumbling-block in his brother's way*, anticipate the awful consequences. Adams had agreed to ride the pony home; night came on, and hour after hour stole away, but he did not make his appearance. His wife looked out for him every instant, and none of her neighbours could give her any information. At length poor Susan had to sustain the mournful intelligence that her children were fatherless and she a widow. It appeared that her husband had proceeded several miles on his way home, when the pony left almost wholly to its own guidance, had stopped, it appeared, to drink at a pond, at some distance from any habitation, where his rider had fallen into the water. The sight of the pony grazing quietly by the spot, attracted the notice of some people returning from the fair, who found the body after a short search; but all attempts to restore animation proved unavailing. What at this time were the feelings of Chalmers? The desolation in Adams' cottage was as a heaven compared with his reflections... When first told of his companion's death, he could hardly believe it to be true. He caught

hold of every one who passed his door, entreating for further information, but every thing tended to confirm the truth of the report. Oh ! how miserable did he feel when his conscience told him with awful distinctness, that *he* had coolly and deliberately laid the snare which had hurried his neighbour into eternity. Some one exclaimed, "Poor Adams ! I dealt with him every market-day, and never once saw him in liquor ; who could have done it ?" Chalmers started ; and a voice as powerful as if a giant had shouted in his ear, again told him, *Thou art the man.*

Chalmers was now for the first time agitated by remorse. He returned to his cottage, and sometimes tried to soothe his troubled mind by worldly apologies ; but *there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked*, and Chalmers found it a fearful reality. Several days elapsed, and he still sought to deceive his own heart, but he was still wretched ; tears started into his eyes when he first addressed the widow, yet they arose from mixed feelings rather than from real contrition. Instead of humbling himself before God in the full conviction that he had sinned beyond all hope

of forgiveness, except through the merits and intercession of his Saviour, he sought to justify his conduct in the eyes of the world, and in search of that peace which it was unable to bestow. He distinguished himself by several acts of liberality towards the family he had so deeply injured. He told Susan, that as soon as her little boy was old enough, he would undertake to put him in the way of gaining an honest livelihood ; and he sincerely intended, at that moment, to perform his promise. From our knowledge of his character, however, it may be held doubtful whether he would ever have fulfilled it. In the meantime, providence in its wisdom, saw fit to bring his career towards its close. Scarcely three months after the death of Adams, he experienced an attack of paralysis, which not only deprived him of the use of one side, but affected his mind to such a degree, that Hester was advised to send for his nearest relations. She accordingly dispatched two letters by that day's post,—one to her brother, the other to an uncle in business at Dover, who was the only surviving member of her father's family.

The meeting between these individuals, was, under existing circumstances, sufficiently painful; James Chalmers, the uncle, was almost a stranger, so that Maurice and Hester, derived most of their consolation from being able to mingle their tears together, as they tended their infirm and almost insensible parent. 'But what sort of man was this James Chalmers?' the reader will say. In answer to this question we shall give a short conversation which passed between Maurice and Hester soon after his arrival.

"How many years have passed, since I remember my uncle coming to see us," observed the former, one evening, when the individual alluded to was absent. "I can just remember his bringing me a kite on my birthday, and I remember too, that when we were going to fly it, two or three men made him walk off with them; and the next day we were told that he had been arrested for debt."

"Dear Maurice, how well I recollect that," replied Hester: "my uncle brought me some present at the same time, and I cried bitterly when I heard he was gone to prison. Some

time afterwards, I asked my mother what was become of him, and why he was so cruelly treated, for I thought him too good-natured to injure any one. It seems like yesterday, when she took me upon her knee and explained, that my uncle had acted unjustly in neglecting to pay every one their due ; and that however kind he might appear in giving me presents, it was dishonest to give any thing, so long as he owed more than he could pay."

"Oh ! I recollect my mother saying something of the kind to me one day," said Maurice ; "she said we were commanded in the Bible to *render unto every one their due*. (Rom. xiii. 7.) Then she spoke of the hardships and inconvenience that people suffer, when their claims are neglected ; and bade me remember that *the Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed*." (Psalm ciii. 6.)

"My uncle is now very well off, I believe," observed Hester, after a pause ; "at least every one says so."

"Oh yes," answered Maurice, "he keeps a servant, besides two or three apprentices. Grocery must be a good business, I think."

Here they were interrupted by the entrance of their uncle himself. He told them their father's complaint had taken a turn which gave some hopes of his recovery. Towards evening these favourable symptoms became more evident, and from this time the bodily strength of Chalmers continued to improve; but not so his intellectual faculties. Every action, on the contrary, and every word, tended to show the disordered state of his mind. Sometimes he fell into a kind of stupor, which rendered him unconscious of the presence of any one; at others his nerves became so irritable that he could not bear to be left alone for an instant; and in this afflicting state of mental derangement he continued to exist during the remainder of his life. In this trying period, Hester showed the most affectionate assiduity. She rarely left him for an hour, and yet, with the occasional assistance of some one or other of her kind neighbours, contrived to discharge every domestic duty in a creditable manner. No further change being likely to take place in her father's condition, her uncle returned to his business, and her brother to his master.

In this manner, things continued for about a year, when Maurice, who had spent the last winter in Leicestershire with his master, appeared unexpectedly at the cottage. After the first expressions of surprise and pleasure were over, he informed his sister that Mr. Stevenson was on the point of breaking up his establishment and going abroad, by which he would lose his situation. Hester expressed her sincere regret that he should lose so good a place,—and gazing on her brother, could not help thinking to herself, what a neat and respectable looking lad he was. Maurice seeing her eyes fixed upon him, imagined she must be admiring either his new shirt-pin, or a bunch of new seals attached to an old watch which his father had given to him when he went to service.

“Well,” said he, “and what are you looking at?” Hester perceived by the smile on her brother’s countenance that he wished her to admire something, so she surveyed him from head to foot, and discovered the finery we have mentioned.

“Let me look at your seals, Maurice,” said she; “did you buy them yourself?”

"To be sure I did," replied Maurice; "I bought them with my own money; and see," continued he, taking a parcel from his pocket, "I did not forget absent friends either. This ribbon is for you, dear Hester; I bought it for you as I passed through Coventry, and these little scissors at Birmingham."

"Thank you very much, dear brother, for thinking of me," said Hester, much gratified by his attention. "I wish I had something to give you in return."

"I have two pounds left of my wages, besides enough to pay my shoe bill for the last year," added Maurice; am I not a good manager?"

Hester praised her brother's frugality; she wondered how he could possibly buy so many pretty things, pay his bills, and lay by two pounds, out of eight pounds a year. She did not know how common it was for servants to resort to dishonest means of increasing the profits of their situation,—still less did she suspect that her brother had already adopted such nefarious practices. Many a time, however, had Maurice stinted the horses of their corn in order to procure these indulgences.

When he travelled into Leicestershire, he added at least a quarter of the money allowed for the horse, to his own board wages. At the same time, he was so quick, obliging, and industrious, that all his fellow-servants liked him ; and so little did his master suspect the systematic depredations committed on his property, that when he parted with him a few weeks afterwards, he praised his conduct and promised to do every thing in his power to procure him another place. His sister was exceedingly gratified with all this, and fondly hoped that the good bishop's advice had indeed taken root in his heart. Maurice, however, had a great notion of his own importance, and humility was a virtue he did not seem to comprehend. He was elated beyond measure, and fancied that something very good was about to turn up for him. But days and weeks rolled on ; Mr. Stevenson left the country, and all the inquiries that Maurice set on foot about different places ended in nothing. At last his uncle paid a visit to the cottage, and expressed a wish to assist him. He had, he said, a friend in London, in good business as a butcher, who wanted the tem-

porary help of an active lad, in the place of an apprentice who was ill ; and Maurice, his uncle thought, would just suit his friend's purpose. Maurice was tired of staying at home, and being pleased with the idea of seeing London, gladly consented to go upon trial.

Mr. Wagner, for so his new master was called, was a remarkably kind-hearted man, and found Maurice so industrious, and attentive to all his instructions, that he became extremely fond of him, and gave him many little perquisites in addition to his weekly wages. Every thing went on smoothly for a time ; but Maurice became dissatisfied with his wages, and longed for some way of making more money. Had his excellent sister been at his elbow, she would probably have had some influence over him ; she would at least have reminded him that "*he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.*" Prov. xxviii. 20. But alas ! he had swerved from the path of integrity, and was proceeding onward with no guides but his own passions and thirst for gain.

For several weeks Mr. Wagner was surprised at seeing Maurice spend more money

than he supposed him to possess, and length seeing him one Sunday with a silk umbrella, he spoke to him in plain terms of his extravagance. It occurred to Mr. Wagner, however, that the lad's uncle, who was a rich man, might injudiciously send him too much pocket-money, and he once asked Maurice if such were the case. Maurice blushed, and simply replied that his uncle was very kind to him. This answer satisfied Mr. Wagner at the moment, but a short time his suspicions were awakened in a more serious manner. Several of his customers had discovered that the meat sent to their houses was deficient in weight, and complaints were brought against him. The honest butcher was much concerned at the accusation, for he was a truly conscientious man, and scrupulously just in his dealing. He knew it to be a practice among some butchers' boys, to pare a certain quantity off each joint which they carried home, and he resolved to watch Maurice very narrowly. The consequence was an almost immediate discovery of the culprit. He was observed one morning to carry a sirloin of beef into

pawnbroker's shop of the lowest description, where some ounces were speedily removed. It is needless to dwell on the master's anger, and the guilty boy's confusion on his detection. An account of the whole affair was instantly forwarded to his uncle, and Maurice was dismissed in disgrace. Thus again did he reap the fruits of dishonesty.

On his return home he found his father much worse in health; a few days put a period to his sufferings, and the two children were left entirely dependant upon their uncle. The latter having arrived a day or two before his brother's decease, was enabled to pay the last duties to his memory, and arrange, on the spot, some plans for the future. Hester professed her acquiescence in any arrangement her uncle might make for her; but Maurice hung his head, as he recollected his disgraceful and sinful conduct in London. Mr. Chalmers easily divined the nature of his nephew's thoughts, and plainly told him that he would cease to acknowledge him on the repetition of a similar offence. Maurice wept, and expressed contrition for what he had done.

"If you really determine to forsake such disgraceful practices," said his uncle, "I think I can place you in a respectable situation. I know a person who keeps a large haberdasher's shop in Oxford-street, who would probably take you into his house on my recommendation:—What do you say to that?"

Maurice who never expected any thing so good, thanked his uncle with much animation for so kind an offer. Mr. Chalmers then turning towards Hester, asked her whether she would live with him, instead of going out to service. Hester, who at first could hardly believe her uncle to be in earnest, accepted this proposal with evident pleasure. Her extreme diffidence disposed her to look upon service with a kind of dread, and it seemed a delightful alternative to live under the roof of an uncle who had always treated her with kindness.

Resuming our narrative after the interval of a few months, we find Maurice and Hester settled in their respective homes; the former having obtained the situation above mentioned. Hester was treated with much

consideration by her uncle, but a residence of six months under his roof, led to discoveries which induced her to repent her choice. Her uncle kept a large shop, and lived so comfortably that she was soon convinced of the prosperity of his affairs ;—but she at length became aware of the real source of his wealth, and we shall take this opportunity of giving some additional details of the history of Mr. Chalmers. We have already alluded to his pecuniary difficulties. Of these his own idleness and extravagance in early life was the cause. He began the world with a fair capital and a good business, but he lived beyond his means and got into debt. It is proverbial that creditors have the best memories in the world, and the creditors of Mr. James Chalmers formed no exception to the rule. Demands were soon made which he was totally unable to satisfy, and an arrest and bankruptcy were the consequence. When he again began the world, with prospects very different from those with which he commenced business, an individual stepped forward to assist him, with whom he had but a slight acquaintance. This man,

who was well known as an extensive dealer in contraband goods, was looking out for some one to join him in his perilous speculations, and knowing a good deal of Chalmers's history, marked him as a person not likely to be very particular about the means, provided ample profits were secured to him. Chalmers, as he expected, consented at once to try his fortune, and became in a short time notorious for his smuggling transactions. Success crowned the exertions of both in this lawless traffic, and they rejoiced in their iniquity. Chalmers kept a large grocer's establishment, which afforded many facilities for contraband trade, and not being sufficiently cautious in the presence of his niece, sometimes betrayed the nature of his dealings. All this gave poor Hester great uneasiness, and a letter which she wrote to her brother about this time, expresses her feelings on the occasion.

Dear Maurice,

I write you these few lines, hoping they will find you in good health, and in better spirits than they leave me at present.

Dear brother, I must open my heart to you, and tell you all my troubles, lest you should think me dissatisfied and ungrateful for all the blessings which it has pleased God to send me. Nothing can exceed the kindness of my uncle's treatment. The day after my arrival he desired me to give away several of my old clothes, which he replaced with new ones, telling me he intended to provide for me as if I was his own daughter. Then he desired the maid to obey my directions, and when we dine together, (for my uncle keeps a separate table from the shopmen,) she waits upon us both like master and mistress. All this you may well think good treatment. But now comes the sad part: we might well wonder how my uncle so soon became rich, after having nothing left. Alas! it has not been by honest industry; it is all by means of the free trade, as they call it—or, as it should be called, the unlawful trade of smuggling foreign goods into the country without paying the duty which they ought to do to government. I am afraid to say how many hundred pounds my uncle made last year, by cargoes of tea,

tobacco, and French brandy, that were landed in some secret place, before the Custom-house officers knew any thing of the matter. The smugglers, too, are such wicked people in all ways, that it is very sad to have any thing to do with them ; especially to encourage them to break the law, for the Bible itself tells us to obey those under authority.

As you are not acquainted with this part of the country, I should inform you, that some of the king's officers are always on the watch for vessels that come in, in order that they may see that there are no forbidden goods on board, or that proper duty is paid for lawful goods. Those that carry smuggled cargoes run all risks to avoid this inspection ; some carry fire-arms and resist the king's vessels, so that a smuggler often ends in being a murderer. Thinking over all these things I am more and more uneasy at my new manner of life ; for my conscience tells me I should act wrong were I to continue living here as if nothing had happened, when I am able to get my own subsistence. I cannot help feeling that my uncle has become rich, and able to maintain me in the

way he does, by guilty means, and "*better is little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.*" Proverbs xv. 8. So a few days since, after passing a sleepless night, I took courage, and told my uncle, that I thought it would be better for me to be active and go to service. He looked very much surprised, and asked what I meant, and what made me weary of his house. I then told him what I felt, as civilly as I could. He laughed at first, and said some of his most genteel customers favoured the smugglers, and I had better address myself to them; upon which I could not help observing, that the greater the people were, the worse it was to encourage what was unlawful. I fear I offended him very much, for he got into a sad passion, and has scarcely given me one kind word since. I am much grieved at this, but still think and hope that I have done right. I have been so fortunate as to meet with a kitchen-maid's place, in a very respectable family residing near Ramsgate, where I hope to be settled next week. God grant that I may serve my employers faithfully. My uncle will, I trust, be better pleased

with me before that time; he has certainly shewn us both much kindness, and I would gladly show my sense of it. Farewell, dear brother; write soon, and believe me your affectionate sister,

HESTER CHALMERS.

The following week Hester left the house of her uncle, who parted from her with great coldness. Her new situation seemed at first to be pleasant, but circumstances occurred in a very short time to render it the reverse, and to call her honest principles again into action. About a month after her arrival the housekeeper was obliged to leave the family, on account of ill health, and her place was supplied for a time by an elderly woman, of whose integrity Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins entertained a very high opinion. This person however, whose name was Sharpe, had succeeded in deceiving her employers with regard to her real character. She was one of those people who can talk fluently of the responsibility of a situation; and dwell feelingly on the depravity of dishonest servants, only with a view to ward off suspicion from their

own practices. It was soon discovered by her fellow servants that Mrs. Sharpe was in the habit of conveying various small articles out of the house, by means of a female from Ramsgate, who was said to wash for her. They one and all condemned this breach of confidence, but at the same time were aware that the new housekeeper stood so high in the estimation of their master and mistress, that it was more than probable they might injure themselves and not do any good by interfering.

"I shall be forced to seek another place soon," said the laundry-maid, one day, "I will not stay and see things going on as they are."

"I am sure I would be off to-morrow," replied the dairy-maid, "if I could find another situation; it is plain this vile woman may do what she pleases."

"But why not let my mistress know?" said Hester, "we ought not to conceal it."

"Oh, I had rather lose my place than tell tales," answered the laundry-maid, "every body hates a tell-tale."

"I, too, hate tale-bearing as much as any

one," returned Hester, "but I hate dishonesty still more,—and I fear we could hardly be said to be honest if we stood silently by and saw our master's property stolen. My dear mother used to say it was a false shame which prevented one from speaking under such circumstances. I would rather speak myself, than remain and take no notice."

"Take care what you do," replied the dairy-maid, "I am sure I would not wrong another to the value of a pin, nor see another wronged if I could help it. But Mrs. Sharpe will make her own story good."

"That may be," said Hester, "and we may possibly suffer by it; yet it is a duty we owe to ourselves as well as to our mistress, to speak; and let us at any rate discharge our plain duty, and relieve our consciences, whether we succeed or not."

"I cannot deny but that you have the right of it," observed one of the maids, "but I fear for your success."

Hester was afraid too, but she prayed for courage to do what her conscience told her was right; nor did she even postpone th

fulfilment of the office she had taken upon her, but immediately requested leave to speak to her mistress, when she made a diffident but full statement of the housekeeper's misconduct. Mrs. Jenkins expressed the greatest surprise, and at first seemed inclined to disbelieve the accusation; but the whole truth was soon brought to light. Mrs. Sharpe when spoken to, of course denied the imputation in the most vehement and indignant manner, as was anticipated; but her anxiety to conceal her innocent clothes-basket, as she called it, confirmed her mistress's suspicions; and under the clothes were found a piece of ham, a pound of coffee, and other articles, of which Mrs. Sharpe had the sole custody. Thus ended the affair, and Hester was rewarded by the approbation of her mistress and fellow-servants. After a time, however, the laundry-maid, who was a weak and ignorant woman, became jealous of Hester's increasing favour in the eyes of Mrs. Jenkins, and began to talk of tale-bearers, to speak harshly, and lay unnecessary blame upon her. Hester was at first disposed to resent this unkind usage, but she happily remembered

the Christian precept, which forbids us to render evil for evil, and prayed frequently and fervently that she might be enabled to overcome evil with good. Her prayers were granted, for her fellow-servant's persecutions relaxed, and at length not only ceased altogether, but were replaced by conciliation and kindness. Towards the end of the following year, Hester was ordered to accompany her master and mistress to London, where she had the gratification of seeing her brother. Maurice was become a nice respectable-looking young man, (for the brother and sister were now in their twentieth year)—civil in his address, extremely active, and well versed in business. His master, a person of some eminence in his calling, found him so useful that he promised him good wages in the event of his remaining after the expiration of the term of his apprenticeship. Maurice looked forward to this arrangement with much satisfaction, and Hester was equally anxious that he should be so respectably situated. She was consequently disappointed when she received a letter from her brother, written in high spirits, and informing her that

he was about to leave his master, and become shopman to Messrs. Swindle and Story, haberdashers, near — square, where his salary would be higher than with his old master. It appeared that money alone was his inducement to change his original plan, and certainly to poor Maurice, who looked upon riches as essential to happiness, his prospects seemed brighter than ever. He mentioned in his letter several instances of fortunes having been made by the young men employed by Messrs. Swindle and Story ; and concluded in the following affectionate manner. “ I was thinking last night, Hester, if I made money as quickly as the rest, how long it might be before I should have a sum sufficient to open a shop for myself, and take my own dear sister to live under my roof :— nay, do not call this a mad scheme ; light gains and frequent, make a heavy purse you know, and if I live to make mine heavy, you shall surely share it.”

Hester was half pleased, half grieved, by this communication. In spite of his kind feelings towards herself, she could not but think he was acting unwisely ; and his —

treme anxiety to become rich excited her apprehensions. Some intelligence she received a few days afterwards gave her additional disquiet, and she immediately addressed the following letter to her brother :—

Dear Maurice,

I sit down in haste to reply to your kind letter, for I have just learnt something which occasions me much unhappiness. There is a lady, a Mrs. Baker, from London, now visiting my mistress, whose servant tells me some very unpleasant things respecting the character of the place you are going to, and I cannot rest till I make you acquainted with it. I was asking a fellow-servant, last night, whether she remembered Messrs. Swindle and Story's shop, when Mrs. Baker's maid enquired if they were any friends of mine; I answered No, but a friend of mine was going to live with them. More's the pity, then, said she, for I do not know two greater rogues in all England. These were her very words. I instantly entreated her very earnestly to tell me all she knew, and have good reason to believe that the house has a very bad

character. They are notorious for advertisements of cheap goods, and by that means impose in various ways upon country customers. Mrs. Baker herself has had personal experience of their fraudulent transactions.

I am also informed that the young men who make the most money under their roof, are those who assist the principals in their evil dealings. Oh! why will not masters recollect that *divers weights and divers measures are alike abominable unto the Lord.* (Prov. xx. 10.) Now my dear brother, inquire into these matters for yourself, and act accordingly. If there is the least truth in the reports, and I cannot doubt them, pray avoid temptation. Would it not be much better to continue under your present master, earning for yourself fair and liberal wages, than for the sake of a little more, to run the chance of having your morals corrupted, your future success prevented, and your sister's happiness destroyed?

My poor mistress appears to be in a very declining state of health, and requires great attendance. Her bell has just rung, and I must close my letter. God bless you, my

dear brother, and believe me your affectionate sister,

HESTER CHALMERS.

Hester's fears concerning her mistress's health were very soon confirmed. In the course of the ensuing evening, Mrs. Jenkins died, and upon this event, Mr. Jenkins having determined to reduce his establishment, informed Hester that her services would not be required longer than a few months. She had not received any tidings of her brother since her last letter; and having accompanied her master to Tunbridge Wells soon after her mistress's decease, she wrote again, informing him of all that had happened to herself, and requesting in return an account of his own proceedings. For several posts she looked in vain for some communication from Maurice, and as her heart became sick with disappointment, how much was she delighted to receive a visit from her brother himself. After some desultory conversation, Maurice told his sister that he had been nearly a month in the employment of Messrs. Swindle and Story, where every thing had hitherto equalled his

expectations. Hester looked anxiously at her brother. "I see you do not approve of this," said he, "but I wish you to speak plainly, and I will answer all your objections."

"My dear Maurice, you know all my objections."

"Well, I believe I do," replied Maurice ; "I read your letter several times over before I took the situation, but take it I did, because I thought it a pity to lose so good an opportunity of bettering myself."

"If I really thought you were going to better yourself," said Hester, "I should rejoice; but if the character I heard of the shop be true—"

"No matter," interrupted Maurice eagerly; "I will confess at once, my dear sister, that there is little to be said in favour of my employers; and I admit too, that some of their young men are likewise very worthless; but it does not follow that because I live under the same roof, I must necessarily follow their example."

"God forbid," said Hester.

"Then what are you afraid of," demanded her brother, warmly. "I tell you ag

again that I see all their faults, and despise them heartily."

"Oh, Maurice," answered Hester, "*let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed, lest he fall.*" (1 Cor. x. 12.)

"You carry your mistrust too far, Hester," said Maurice proudly. "I know I used to do things not strictly honest when I was a boy, but I assure you I feel quite ashamed of them now ; I have been very watchful over myself these last few years, and am resolved to be steady the remainder of my life."

Maurice spoke the truth, when he assured his sister that he had struggled against his evil inclinations, but his self-confidence gave rise to much inquietude in her breast ; she longed to impress upon his mind that we stand in the greatest danger when we least suspect our own weakness,—and that we provoke the Almighty to withdraw his grace, when, presuming on our own strength, we wilfully expose ourselves to temptation. She did, indeed, try to render her brother less confident, but all her arguments proved fruitless, and he persisted in his own views.

"Have you heard any thing of my uncle, lately," inquired Hester, after a pause.

"Not a word," answered Maurice, "I suppose it is all on account of your leaving him."

"I am sadly afraid he was too much offended to answer any of my letters," said Hester, sorrowfully. "Last winter, when the weather was so cold, I knitted him a pair of gloves and sent them, hoping they would keep his hands from rheumatism, but never received any acknowledgment. At first I felt inclined to be angry,—but I remembered that St. Peter says, *If when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God.*" (Pet. ii. 20.)

"You are a good girl, Hester," said Maurice, moved with his sister's unaffected piety; "I hope I shall never cause you trouble."

"After remaining a day with his sister, Maurice returned to the situation he considered so favourable to his interests. There he beheld dishonesty in almost every form; goods unlawfully obtained, fraudulent weights and measures, with falsehood and i

without end. Altogether might the profits of the establishment be denominated *the bread of deceit*. It was not to be expected that a young man of Maurice Chalmers' disposition should, in the midst of such scenes, remain uncontaminated. In the course of a few months, his good resolutions began to fade; he became less and less watchful over himself; his pride increased, and his moral rectitude weakened.

At this fearful period of his career, we must, however, leave him, in order to follow our young friend, Hester, who, after leaving Mr. Jenkins, was hired by an elderly lady of the name of Martin. Miss Martin rented a small house in the vicinity of Bromley. Poor Hester soon discovered that her mistress was passionate and capricious, and she found her wages very hardly earned. Miss Martin was so penurious that she grudged her servants the very necessities of life. Their food was of the cheapest, and consequently often of the worst description, and every thing like indulgence was uniformly denied. Hester longed to leave this place at the end of the first
but after reflecting on the subject

for some time, she wisely determined to try and bear with her difficulties, rather than give it up, and have no home, or certain prospect of another situation. Young people would often do well, under similar circumstances, to imitate Hester's example. In the meantime, however, she had a difficult part to perform ; but it was fortunate that her fellow-servants were kindly disposed towards her, particularly one of them,—a girl of fifteen, who, having left home for the first time in her life, had profited greatly by her example and instructions. This young creature, like many other people, had fancied that she was to lead a comparatively easy life when she went to service, and she was of course grievously disappointed. She was about to pack up her clothes and walk away directly, but was restrained by the kind and reasonable counsels of Hester. And when inclined to rebel under the unjust attacks of her mistress, often would Hester remind her that St. Paul exhorts servants *to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again.* (Titus ii. 9.) In short, she succeeded at length in living

to Mary Hill, for so the girl was called, much of her own conscientious feeling.

Nothing of any particular importance occurred in the history of Hester Chalmers for nearly a twelvemonth after this time ; at the expiration of which period she received the following letter from her unfortunate brother :

Dear Hester,

I write these lines under the greatest distress of mind I ever experienced. I have been obliged to leave my master suddenly, and if Providence brings me safely over a few more days, I hope to cross the seas and seek my fortune in some other country. This, Hester, is my only chance : I have acted a sad part, and if I remain here, my life may be in danger. Dear sister, I do not say this to distress you. Alas ! I would give you comfort if I could, but it is right that you should know the truth. If you can spare a few pounds to one unworthy of the name of brother, pray send them immediately, directed to Charles Jones, Carter Street, Clerkenwell. God bless you, and believe me your unhappy but affectionate brother,

M. C.

The contents of this letter threw Hester into the greatest alarm. Trembling with apprehensions, and yet wishing to know the worst, she enclosed five pounds, all the money she possessed, and dispatched her reply by that day's post, begging her brother at the same time, in the most affectionate manner, to make her acquainted with the circumstances of his distress. Several days passed away without any communication, and Hester's thoughts were so occupied with her brother's condition, that she insensibly relaxed in some of the minor duties of her situation. Amongst other blunders she one day forgot to deliver a note which her mistress had charged her to send by that night's post. She was sitting at work when she suddenly recollected her omission. Rising hastily, she found that the mail had passed some time: the poor girl was ready to cry at her forgetfulness: but what was to be done? Her fellow-servants, with whom she was a great favourite, endeavoured by turns to comfort her.

"Say nothing about the note," cried Mary Hill, "unless Miss Martin asks you; that

will be telling no story, you know, and you can put it into the post to-morrow ; it will be the same thing."

"How do I know that, Mary?" said Hester, good-naturedly, "I am unacquainted with the contents of the letter, and the difference of a day may be of some consequence."

"Oh! but let it take its chance at any rate," said one of the maids, "and if any thing should be wrong, our mistress can only mention it."

This seemed reasonable enough, and Hester felt for a moment inclined to follow the advice; but a moment or two of reflection, convinced her that she could not do so with propriety.

"No," said she, to Mary, "I must not do this; I have already committed one fault to-day, and I should commit another, were I to conceal it. *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."* "

Hester having decided upon what she ought to do, went directly to her mistress, and made a submissive acknowledgment of her fault. The latter was outrageous.

"In my house you shall not remain another day," exclaimed this unchristian lady, raising her voice to the highest pitch: "You are perpetually forgetting something or other."

Hester felt the extreme injustice of this accusation, yet bore it with a look of humble resignation. "I beg your pardon, madam," said she, "and I am very sorry for my carelessness."

"You may save yourself the trouble of begging my pardon," replied her mistress, sharply; "It is of no use pretending to cry and be sorry, in order to move my pity."

Hester was silent.

"Oh! you have nothing to say for yourself, now? I beg to ask, however, whether you know that I expect my house to be full of company next week?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Hester.

"Yes, ma'am: is that all you can say: I beg to know where I am to find second-course dishes for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday?"

Hester looked up, wondering to herself what her mistress could possibly mean.

"Well," resumed the latter, "what you stand staring there for, instead of giving me an answer?"

"I ask your pardon, ma'am," said He with much embarrassment, "but I do not understand what you mean."

"Why simply this, if you choose to understand it. I wrote to my nephew to send a basket of game, and it will now be possible for him to do so in time, as the post is to-morrow. And now what am I to substitute for hares and partridges; for three shillings and sixpence, and duck six shillings a couple, eh?"

The latter part of Miss Martin's address betrayed the real source of her vexation we have already alluded to her parsimonious disposition. Towards Hester, she behaved on the present occasion, with the influence of narrow-minded and passionate character. It was decided that she should leave service, but here again Miss Martin's selfishness interfered with her displeasure. At last she desired Hester to quit the house to-morrow, then at the end of a week, and at that time came, finding her services too

able to be dispensed with, had the additional injustice to refuse her a character until it suited her own convenience to spare her. It was a sorrowful day for her fellow-servants when Hester was at last called upon to leave the family, particularly to Mary, who had become much attached to her.

Hester's first plan was to go immediately to London in search of her brother, and she accordingly took a place in one of the coaches which drove up to the inn at Bromley, as she was in the act of crossing Miss Martin's threshold. On her arrival in town, she made the best of her way to the house of a respectable person of the name of Parker, who kept a servant's register-office in Oxford-street, and who was a distant relation of her father's. From Mr. and Mrs. Parker she experienced a hospitable reception, and her drooping spirits revived under the influence of their kindness. She was not long before she spoke of the subject nearest her heart; Mr. Parker however listened in silence, and from the looks which passed between himself and his wife, was evidently at a loss in what manner to reply to the poor girl's inquiries. "Oh!

Mr. Parker," she exclaimed, "I see you know all; I am sure you know more than I am acquainted with. Tell me immediately, —do not hide any thing from me."

"Poor thing," said Mr. Parker, looking with pity upon Hester; "tell her every thing, my dear," he continued, addressing his wife, "It is well known now, and there is no use in making a secret of it."

"I will indeed tell you every thing I know, Hester," replied Mrs. Parker, speaking with the hesitation of a person who would fain make the best of bad news: "your brother is in prison, upon a charge of forgery."

Hester was prepared for distressing intelligence, but she was nevertheless much shocked at the confirmation of her fears. When she was somewhat recovered, Mrs. Parker proceeded to inform her, that very extensive forgeries had been committed on some of the country banks, and that the whole scheme had been brought to light by the confession of one of the accomplices; by this individual Maurice Chalmers was charged with having uttered counterfeit notes, knowing them to have been forged. At present

every circumstance contributed to confirm his guilt. Several counterfeit notes were found in his possession; and it was strongly suspected that he had frequently withdrawn the contents of his master's till, and replaced them by such notes. Poor Hester listened to this detail with her face hid in her handkerchief, and at length found some relief in a flood of tears. She expressed a wish to visit her unhappy brother, and Mr. Parker, who was a humane and kind-hearted man, promised to procure that consolation on the following day. She then retired, and prayed earnestly that God would strengthen her under her present trials, and enable her to meet all circumstances with Christian humility and resignation. Having spent the greater part of the night in prayer and thoughtfulness, she rose at day-break, not much refreshed indeed, but comforted; and betook herself to her Bible. There, having come to the passage, "*Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord,*" (Psalm xxvii. 14.) she felt how gracious and how soothing were the words, in her present condition; and in the

spirit of grateful piety, she fell on her knees, exclaiming aloud, "*I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.*" Psalm cxix. 76.

In the course of the day, Mr. Parker having procured her admission to her brother, took her along with him to Newgate, and in a couple of hours she found herself for the first time within the walls of a gaol. When conducted to her brother, neither the presence of Mr. Parker, the gaoler, nor that of an elderly gentleman, who was sitting with her brother, could restrain her feelings, and she rushed forward, exclaiming, "My dear Maurice,—my dear brother." On the other side the sight of his affectionate sister was more than the spirit of the culprit could at that moment bear; he attempted to grasp her hand, and fell senseless to the floor. Every assistance being immediately rendered to him, he recovered in a short time. Gazing wildly around, he again perceived his sister, and taking her hand, said in a tremulous voice, "Oh! Hester, kindest and most virtuous of sisters, I have lived to bring disgrace upon thee."

Hester, with more self-possession than could have been anticipated, exerted herself to speak comfort to her brother, laying before him in tender and emphatic terms, the only true source of pardon and peace.

After having spent some time in this manner, Maurice told his sister how he had been insensibly led to commit the crime for which he was now confined. "The last twelve months of my life," he observed, "afford an instructive lesson to every young man in my situation. My first great fault was *pride*, for although I knew that my path was beset with danger, I fancied I could escape by my own vigilance. I need not say that my fancied strength proved utter weakness. One of my masters affected to disbelieve the Scriptures, and both lived as if they had never known them ; but not content with acting themselves according to their own views, they encouraged their servants and shopmen to do the same. By degrees I associated myself with Sabbath-breakers and other bad characters ; and though at first often shocked at the blasphemy and vicious expressions which met my ear, I soon became

less scrupulous. I still continued to pray occasionally, but it was more from a sort of habit, than from any feelings of real devotion. At last I got acquainted with a young man of the name of Jervis, who prided himself on being able to procure more money than any of us. I could scarcely conceive by what means he was so rich as he professed to be. One day he offered to let me into his secret, which he did, having first made me swear not to betray him. He was connected with a gang of coiners, and he proffered me a share in the adventure. I consented, alas ! and, in that hour laid the foundation of all my present misery ;—but no, I am wrong, the foundation was laid before, but this transaction was the cause of my being here. I agreed to pass a certain sum of base coin daily, and in proportion as my riches increased, I became more and more wedded to the wages of sin. I even attempted one day to pass forged notes on my employers ; and succeeding beyond my expectations, scarcely a week elapsed afterwards without my practising this and other frauds upon them. From what I have learnt, since my

imprisonment, it appears that the police had discovered the existence of the gang; and I was struck with consternation one morning to hear that several of the principal parties concerned had been apprehended. My determination was to fly immediately, and I communicated my intention to Jervis, whom I believed to be my sincere friend. This man however, had betrayed the rest, and he betrayed me; may God forgive him. I believe he entertained some fears that all was not going on as he wished, and in order to secure his own escape he sold his information, and was a traitor to those he had entangled in his snares. But if I had thought at all, what kind of truth and friendship could I have expected from such a character! I have nothing more to tell you, my dear sister. My trial comes on very soon, and God grant that I may be prepared for the worst."

"Let us thank God," said Hester, still weeping, "that he has not cut you off suddenly, but has given you, in his infinite mercy, time for repentance."

"I do, I do," said the poor sinner, with evident sincerity and remorse; "I have never

ceased to do so, since I entered these walls. And see, Hester," added he, as the elderly gentleman we have already mentioned, and who was the chaplain of the goal, again approached them, "there is the gentleman who has been the instrument of awakening my heart to a deep, and I humbly hope a contrite, sense of its corruption and sinfulness. Pray for me, my dear sister, and pray that God may bless him also."

At this moment, the goaler came to inform them, that Hester must leave her brother for the night. The poor girl hastened to obey the order ; she kissed her brother affectionately, and having obtained an order from the goaler for her admission on the following day, left the room, supported by Mr. Parker.

Our space will not allow us to dwell minutely on the events which occurred between this time and the trial of Maurice and his accomplices. At length the awful day drew nigh, and Hester offered up incessant petitions to the Throne of Mercy, that God might remove the cup of bitterness from her. She well knew that the legal punishment for *her brother's* crime was death, and she had no

reason to suppose that he would escape its infliction. At last the dreaded trial came on; the parties were found guilty, and sentence of death passed upon them. The judge addressed them in the most impressive manner, and exhorted them to devote to its most sacred use the small portion of time left them in this world; reminding them that true repentance would lead them to a full confession of their sins. The deportment of Maurice was marked, throughout his trial, with many symptoms of sincere penitence; and during the address of the judge, his limbs trembled, his countenance, lately so pale, was flushed with agitation, and at the conclusion, he was evidently engaged in internal prayer.

But it was not the will of God that Maurice should die. A reprieve was issued, contrary to the expectations of all parties, and he was finally sentenced to transportation for life. It would be needless to dwell upon the feelings of the brother and sister when this sentence was communicated to them; both were grateful beyond the power of outward demonstration, to the Father of all mercies; and Maurice prayed most fervently for his

unhappy accomplices, in whose fearful situation he had so lately stood. A few weeks afterwards, the convict-ship, which was to convey Maurice to Botany Bay, was ready to sail, and Hester, who had scarcely moved from her brother's side, now parted from him for ever, and felt for a time as if she was alone in the world.

We have now brought our tale nearly to a close; the little we have remaining to tell, will serve to shew that a virtuous line of conduct is not only always respected, but sometimes rewarded even in this world. In a short time Hester recovered a portion of her habitual serenity of mind, and felt the necessity of seeking out some situation.

Mrs. Parker, having promised to assist her in her search, accosted her one evening with a look of satisfaction, and informed her that she thought she had heard of a situation likely to suit her. "A lady called this morning," said she, "inquiring for a steady young person to act as cook. I never saw a nicer or more civil-spoken lady, and I think the place will exactly suit you. You are to call and speak to her yourself to-morrow

morning. In the mean time having seen her go into the confectioner's shop opposite, I ascertained from my acquaintance, Mrs. Swete, that both the lady and her husband are excellent people. They live in Argyle Street, and their name is Collins."

On the following morning, Hester made herself ready at the appointed hour to wait upon the lady, and presented herself before Mrs. Parker neatly and respectably attired. "I am ready to accompany you, Hester," said the latter with a look of approbation; "but before we set off, I have one caution to give you, my dear. It may seem a strange one to you, but it is best to mention it. When I told the lady your name, yesterday, she seemed startled; and I easily perceived that your brother's trial, so lately published, gave rise to some suspicion. It is natural, you know, for people to like their servants to come of a respectable stock. I thought, however, I could be as sharp as Mrs. Collins; so turning to the list of names in the register-book, I replied, as if reading the name, Hester Chandless. Still, I fancied she had some hesitation; and she then asked if you did

not come from the neighbourhood of Twickenham. I managed, however, to save your credit, for I said you came from the neighbourhood of Bromley, and that your relations lived at Dover; and with this she seemed quite satisfied."

"Oh! Mrs. Parker, you meant this kindly, —I know you meant it kindly; but I would not for the world obtain this lady's place in such a manner," said Hester.

"Nay, my dear," said Mrs. Parker, "I would not do any thing to hurt your feelings; call yourself Hester Chalmers if you like; good and bad people have the same names; but surely such a white lie would injure no one. At any rate, whatever you say, take care not to mention that your parents lived near Twickenham; I somehow think, that came out on your brother's trial; and if you tell the lady so, I am sure she will not engage you. Besides, my words were true enough; you did come to me from the neighbourhood of Bromley; and your uncle, you know, lives at Dover."

"Alas, my dear Mrs. Parker, if I say or do anything in order to deceive the lady, I shall

not be acting honestly. Indeed, I dare not do it."

Mrs. Parker saw that Hester was really distressed, and being a good-natured woman, desisted from any further remarks ; and having put on her cloak, took the poor girl to Argyle Street. Hester felt much agitated, as she was shewn into the room where Mrs. Collins was seated,—with strict injunctions from Mrs. Parker to be guarded in what she said. Mrs. Collins addressed her with great kindness, and there was something so affable in her manner, that Hester insensibly gained confidence. She entered into a faithful, though diffident, detail of her qualifications, and expressed a timid hope that her character would bear inquiry. "I will write, then, to your late mistress," said the lady: "your name, I think, is Hester Chandless?" Hester coloured deeply ; but her mind had been made up, and she replied, "my name, ma'am, is Hester Chalmers."

"Hester Chalmers, a native of Dover?" asked the lady.

"Mrs. Parker pulled Hester by the sleeve ; but Hester was not to be moved from the

path of her integrity: "I have a relation living at Dover, ma'am, but I was born near Twickenham."

"Near Twickenham," replied Mrs. Collins, eagerly; "it is the same Hester Chalmers, then, that I remember a little girl. Hester, have you forgotten my father,—have you forgotten miss Hawkins?"

Poor Hester's feelings were not to be described. At the moment when she least expected to find a friend, Providence had guided her to the house of her benefactress,—the amiable daughter of the good bishop, and now the wife of Mr. Collins. She shed tears of joy, and felt indeed that God had caused all things to work together for her good. She at once found a home, and a kind mistress.

Soon after this event she received the following letter from her brother:

"Dear Sister,

Before I leave this country for ever, I am anxious to write a few parting lines. Oh! live, as you have hitherto done, in the fear of God; and pray that your brother's heart

may be more conformed to his Spirit. Should you ever become a mother, Hester, teach your children to estimate honesty by the standard of the word of God ; and that none of those little frauds, so generally tolerated by the world, are innocent in the sight of heaven ;—above all things, teach them to speak the plain truth. Tell them my history, and warn them that treasures gained by a lying tongue are vanity. (Prov. xxi. 6,) Dear sister, the wide seas will soon divide us ; but though we shall never see one another again in this world, I trust, that by the mercy of God, we shall meet in that world, “where there will be no more sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain ; where the former things are passed away.” That God will bless and protect you, will ever be the prayer of your affectionate brother,

MAURICE CHALMERS.”

This affecting letter, Hester put into the hands of her mistress, who shewed it to her father, who happened to be then in the house. He asked for Hester, and spoke to her in a very kind manner. “Hester,” said he, “let

us return thanks to God, that he hath been pleased to awaken your brother's heart to a contrite sense of his past sins. May he prove the sincerity of his repentance by his future conduct, and preserve as long as he lives a practical conviction, that while *the lying tongue is but for a moment, the lip of truth shall be established for ever.* (Prov. xii. 19.)

THE END.

